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Curricular models and teaching techniques that support college students as the primary authors of their writing-across-the-curriculum experiences remain largely unexplored. This thesis addresses that research gap by investigating the use of a start-of-term writing self-assessment and goal-setting questionnaire (STQ) for upper-division undergraduates taking writing-intensive (WI) college courses in their majors. The tool was piloted in 23 WI sections at Oregon State University during winter term 2004. Feedback obtained through an end-of-term writing self-evaluation showed that students who completed the start-of-term questionnaire tended to take the effort seriously, fill out the questionnaire completely, and use the tool for its intended purposes of reflective self-assessment and goal-setting. Students saw the tool as something that could help them with their writing, and study results suggest that its benefits may have been reinforced by students' end-of-course review of their STQ responses. Feedback from participating instructors indicated that the tool helped with their teaching as well as their students' learning, and most instructors planned to continue using the STQ beyond the pilot study. Study results also suggest that the questionnaire can serve as a program-level research and assessment tool, providing WI program administrators and policy-makers with new insights on students' writing needs and goals. Campus-wide use of the STQ may lead to WI program enhancements, generate new ideas for WI instructor training, and support department, college, and institutional writing-curriculum development efforts.

Charting Their Own Course as Writers:

A Study of Writing-Intensive Students' Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting

at Start of Term

by

Tracy Ann Robinson

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Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University Libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Tracy Ann Robinson, Author

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DEDICATION

       This thesis is dedicated to the members of Oregon State University's Writing Intensive Curriculum community—students, faculty, administrators, and other program stakeholders throughout this institution whose teaching, learning, and assessment efforts I hope will be supported by the work presented here.

       I also want to dedicate this thesis to my three children, Alison, Nicky, and Peter, with admiration and appreciation for their laughter, love, belief, and tremendous patience with a mom who has spent way too many hours at her computer during the last few years. Thanks for hanging in there. You are precious to me.

Charting Their Own Course as Writers: A Study of Writing-Intensive Students'

Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting at Start of Term

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

> Self-assessment returns the ownership of knowledge, and the accountability for working and learning, back to the learner where it belongs.... Self-assessment is a continuous process that moves us to deeper, more compassionate, more resilient self-knowledge. And self-knowledge is our anchor for making choices in an unpredictable universe. (Fenwick and Parsons 2000, p. 111)

The writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) movement within United States higher education—which, as its name implies, promotes and facilitates a focus on writing activities and instruction in all academic disciplines[1]—emerged during the mid 1970s, partly in response to widespread public concern over a marked downward shift in the writing skills of entering college students at that time (McLeod 2000, Thaiss 2001, Tchudi 1986),[2] but also in step with the growing acknowledgment among educators and composition scholars that writing, in Janet Emig's words, has "unique value for learning" (1977, 127). In David Russell's curricular history of writing in the academic disciplines in American secondary and primary education, the author notes that major elements of WAC's theoretical base include the ideas of British Language-Across-the-Curriculum reformers (most visibly James Britton's contention that language is a way of knowing), Jean Piaget's and Lev Vygotski's discoveries about connections between language and cognitive development in children, and contributions of progressive American educators such as John Dewey, who advocated for a curricular balance between learners' interests and disciplinary demands, and Jerome Bruner, who called for "consciously, systematically using

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[1] Thaiss (1998) characterizes the movement as follows: "The term 'writing across the curriculum' (WAC) usually refers to two related, but distinct phenomena. The first is writing as it is carried out and appears in diverse forms within the many disciplines that make up a school or college curriculum.... The second is the organized effort to spread responsibility for teaching writing and critical thinking among those many disciplines" (356). For a spirited discussion of what WAC is—and is not—see McLeod and Maimon 2000.

[2] McLeod (2000) cites several factors contributing to this shift, including the increased size and diversity of the population that was choosing to continue on to post-secondary education, the advent of open admissions at many colleges and universities, and the shift in the U.S. public school system from essay-based to "objective" testing strategies, which effectively dismantled an important site of writing preparation and skills development during the K-12 years.

writing as a tool for learning in a specifically disciplinary context, rather than as a generalizeable skill" (Russell 1991, 247). For the WAC movement's "focus on the classroom as community; its student-centered pedagogy, often with a subversive tinge; and its neoromantic, expressivist assumptions" (273), Russell credits the ideological legacy of the 1960s, manifested most clearly in the work of Peter Elbow, Ken Macrorie, Donald Graves, and James Moffett.

First emerging in small, private liberal arts colleges—Central in Iowa, Carlton in Minnesota, Beaver (now Arcadia University) in Pennsylvania—WAC programs and practices soon proliferated throughout U.S. higher education. Some of the earliest adopters included Michigan Tech (whose program was established by Art Young and Toby Fulwiler in 1977, the same year that Elaine Maimon's program at Beaver got underway), the universities of Michigan, Washington, and Eastern Oregon, UCLA and UC San Diego, California State Dominguez Hills, Brooklyn College, and Cornell University (Bazerman 2005, Russell 1991); but during the 1980s, hundreds of other institutions also experimented with WAC programs and practices—indeed, by 1988, almost 50 percent of all U.S. post-secondary institutions had WAC programs (McLeod 1992).

Since the movement's inception, WAC programs in higher education have taken many forms,[3] and their functions and focuses continue to evolve today. Hilgers, Hussey, and Stitt-Bergh (1999) note a conceptual shift starting in the 1980s—and in step with the ascendancy of social constructivist theory in composition studies—away from WAC's initial, process-focused, "writing to communicate" approach toward a more situated pedagogical stance of "writing in the disciplines," or WID. Since the 1990s, WAC/WID practitioners have also been increasingly concerned with oral, visual, and electronic communications as well as written texts, as demonstrated by the emergence of many new program acronyms such as CAC ("communications across the curriculum") and WOVE ("written, oral, visual, and electronic communications"). Contributors to McLeod, Miraglia, Soven, and Thaiss's 2001 anthology *WAC for the New Millennium* explore WAC's expanding repertoire of alliances with other educational initiatives, including service learning, ESL training, and learning communities; and Doug Brent (2005) explores the viability of integrating WAC with first-year undergraduate seminar programs.

Still, for all of its programmatic shifts, innovations, and "reinventions" over the years, the WAC movement's essential mission—"to improve student learning and writing by encouraging

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[3] Descriptions of a wide variety of programs and practices can be found in Fulwiler and Young 1990, Herrington and Moran 1992, McLeod and Soven 1992, Russell 1991, and Tchudi 1986, among others.

faculty in all disciplines to use writing more often and more thoughtfully in their classrooms"
(Young and Fulwiler 1986, p.1)—has remained constant. To fulfill this mission, WAC
practitioners approach writing skills development and content learning as two sides of the same
coin, each an integral factor in the other's achievement; and they support faculty who seek to
implement this construct in their teaching. In Susan McLeod's words,

> WAC has been, more than any other recent educational reform movement, one
> aimed at transforming pedagogy at the college level, at moving away from the
> lecture mode of teaching...to a model of active student engagement with the
> material and with the genres of the discipline through writing, not just in English
> classes but in all classes across the university (2000, p. 150).

But while the WAC literature abundantly documents the many strategies that have been
implemented as part of this transformational mission,[4] accounts of students' involvement in
shaping these strategies and consequently in charting their own learning experiences in WAC
courses are largely missing from this body of scholarship. Even studies that have sought student
input in program planning and assessment, such as Beeson and Darrow's (1997), typically have
done so at the *end* of students' WAC experiences; hence, the students who contribute this input
gain little personally from their contributions.[5] To date, curricular models and teaching
techniques that put students squarely at the center of their *forthcoming* WAC experience, and
whose chief purpose is to acknowledge and support these students as the primary authors of their
experience, remain largely unexplored.

The current study helps fill this research gap. It investigates the use of a start-of-term
self-assessment and goal-setting tool designed to enhance students' experience and increase their
level of participation in upper-division, writing-intensive (WI) subject-matter courses across the
curriculum. The tool (shown in Appendix A and described in detail in Chapter 2), helps students
focus on the writing component of their WI course, prompts reflective self-evaluation of their
current writing skills, helps them identify their writing-related expectations for the course, and

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[4] Along with consulting other references cited in this chapter, interested readers will want
to visit the University of Colorado Composition Program's online "WAC Clearinghouse"
(<http://wac.colostate.edu>), which among other things provides a host of references and links to
current and historical articles and resources on WAC teaching and training strategies.

[5] Hilgers, Hussey, and Stitt-Bergh's 1999 study, whose goal was to assess upper-division
WI students' understanding of writing and discipline-specific writing tasks, did include start-of-
term interviews, but the purpose of these interviews was to "plant the seeds of reflective attention
that [the authors] planned to harvest during the second [end-of-term] interview" (321) rather than
explicitly influence the shape of the study participants' WI experience.

generates baseline data for students' end-of-term assessment of their writing progress during the course. Perhaps most importantly, the tool encourages students to articulate personal writing goals for their WI course. Such goals, for whose achievement the students themselves hold primary responsibility, may also provide meaningful focus areas for writing response from peers and instructors.

The self-assessment tool piloted in this study was designed as an efficient and easily administered device for teachers to use in orienting incoming students to the forthcoming WI course. Its intent is to generate a great deal of student input that can help instructors fine-tune their course curriculum according to the needs and preferences of that particular WI section. The data generated by the study instrument may also be useful to WI program administrators, developers, and stakeholders both internal and external to the university. But more important than its potential uses to any other parties are the tool's potential direct benefits for its primary intended audience—WI students themselves.

Study Background and Context

This study was conducted at Oregon State University (OSU) in Corvallis, Oregon. This Research-1 university is the state's land-, sea-, and space-grant institution, and it comprises thirteen schools and colleges, including agricultural sciences, business, education, engineering, forestry, health and human sciences, liberal arts, oceanic and atmospheric sciences, pharmacy, public health, science, veterinary medicine, and the university Honors College. OSU supports the writing-across-the-curriculum initiative in higher education by requiring all undergraduates in the university's eight baccalaureate-degree-granting colleges to complete a writing-intensive (WI) upper-division course in their major field of study. This requirement was voted in to the baccalaureate core curriculum in 1989 by the university's faculty senate as a way to ensure that all students pursuing a bachelor's degree have at least one opportunity during their last two years of study to (1) cultivate a writing skill set specific to their major field of study and (2) practice a variety of writing-based critical-thinking and learning strategies relevant to their discipline.

At OSU, WI courses are both designed and taught by faculty within each undergraduate-major–granting department and program. Thus, the university's designated WI courses (which number approximately 125) vary considerably in form and function. All of these courses, however, share the following curricular features:

- They are upper-division content courses; that is, students enrolled in WI classes grapple with advanced disciplinary subject matter while also working on their disciplinary writing skills.
- They further students' knowledge of and agility with the textual genres and discursive styles characteristic of the associated discipline.
- Every student enrolled in these courses writes a minimum of 5,000 words, at least 2,000 of which comprise polished texts that students have revised after receiving peer and/or instructor response.
- Evaluation of written work constitutes at least 30% of the final grade for these courses.
- All students in these courses produce at least one formal essay, report, proposal, or other discipline-appropriate and documented text that draws from a variety of sources. Students may also produce these documents collaboratively, but every team member must contribute a discrete section of the document.
- As well as formal, "high-stakes" writing assignments, these courses include informal, minimally graded, "writing-to-learn" exercises that support content learning and promote critical thinking.

To ensure that all of these writing emphases can be adequately addressed during the term, a class size of 25 students or less is strongly recommended for WI courses. Department proposals for WI courses that exceed this target enrollment must clearly demonstrate that students' written work will receive adequate attention and response.

When establishing the university's WI requirement, the faculty senate also established a "Writing-Intensive Curriculum" (WIC) program to oversee the process of WI course development and to provide ongoing faculty education and training in WI course delivery. This program is directed by a tenured OSU faculty member whose area of academic expertise is Rhetoric and Composition and who works half-time in this capacity and has a half-time appointment in the English Department.[6] The program, which is funded through the university's Academic Affairs office, receives strong institutional support. The WIC program director works with individual departments to develop WI courses and assists/advises Baccalaureate Core

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[6] Directors of the Oregon State University Writing-Intensive Curriculum program include Lisa Ede (1989–90), Lex Runciman (1990–92), Jon Olson (acting director 1992–93), and Vicki Tolar Burton (1993–present).

Committee members in reviewing new WI course proposals and conducting periodic reviews of existing WI courses.

In addition, the Oregon State WIC program supports university faculty and WI curriculum development in a variety of ways:

- The primary faculty-development vehicle is the ten-hour introductory WIC seminar, offered twice yearly and presented in five two-hour sessions. Participants in this seminar must be nominated by their department chair or head and receive a small stipend upon completion of the five-week series. WI teaching faculty are not formally required to participate in this training but are strongly encouraged to do so; the training is also available to non-WI faculty who wish to increase their repertoires of teaching-with-writing skills. Since the seminar's inception in 1990, close to 400 Oregon State faculty have taken it.

- Oregon State's WIC program also regularly offers other advanced workshops, seminars, and speaker events as well as ongoing topical lunch discussions, again available to both WI faculty and interested non-WI faculty.

- Faculty may schedule individual consultations and syllabi reviews with the WIC program director.

- The OSU WIC program produces a quarterly newsletter, *Teaching with Writing*, for distribution to all teaching faculty at the university. This newsletter includes a variety of information relevant to teaching WI courses and otherwise incorporating writing into subject-matter courses; it also advertises upcoming program events. *Teaching with Writing* is also sent to Oregon community colleges and a number of feeder high schools throughout the state.

- The OSU WIC program website (<http://wic.oregonstate.edu>) provides a broad range of program- and teaching-related information to support the university's WI faculty and students.

- The OSU WIC program also offers annual department development grants as a way to foster teaching-with-writing activities and discussions within and across undergraduate departments and majors. The fifty-some grants that have thus far been awarded have funded a wide range of activities such as department retreats to formalize departmental writing curricula; design of new WI courses; travel support for attendance and presentations at WI-related conferences; development of department writing guides; and co-production (with the Oregon State University Center for Writing and Learning) of a

film, *Writing Across Borders* (2005), about the academic writing experience of international students attending U.S. universities.

Conditions Interfering with WI Program Implementation at the Study University

Clearly, the WI program at Oregon State[7] is healthy and successful, and its mission is endorsed by the university's faculty and administration. Not surprisingly, however, given the program's broad reach and its wide-ranging and diverse student and faculty clientele, the university's WI curriculum is not always implemented to its fullest potential due to several interfering conditions that may or may not be specific to the study institution.

Faculty-related. For faculty, such conditions include the following:

- **Incomplete understanding of the WI baccalaureate core requirement.** While OSU faculty who teach WI courses regularly receive program updates via email from the WI director, they may not read these updates; and while they are encouraged to take the introductory WI seminar and make use of other WI program development opportunities and teaching support tools, they are not required to do so. In some cases, department chairs do not notify faculty (especially new faculty) that the course to which they are assigned is writing-intensive, with specific expectations for writing content. Thus, some WI faculty are only sketchily acquainted with the curricular requirements for WI courses, the reasons for these requirements, and the most effective strategies for fulfilling them. Some faculty may also overlook or ignore some of these requirements, resulting in an incomplete WI experience for their students. (Syllabi that do not meet OSU WI course criteria are eventually identified in the review of WI courses conducted periodically by the university's Baccalaureate Core Committee.)

- **Uncertainty about appropriate writing-related goals and expectations.** At one time or another, many WI faculty experience frustration and uncertainty as "writing teachers." A disconnect between these instructors' expectations of what their department's upper-division students, many of whom are graduating seniors, should be *able* to do as writers and critical thinkers and what the instructors see in actual practice—combined in some cases with a lack of confidence in themselves as writing instructors and assessors—can

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[7] Throughout the rest of this document, I will use "WI" in place of "WIC" to abbreviate "writing-intensive," whether the references are specific to the study university's Writing-Intensive Curriculum program, courses, instructors, and students or are more general. With this stylistic choice, I hope to avoid confusion on the part of non–Oregon-State-based readers of this document , especially those who have not read this Chapter 1 background section.

lead to a sense of discouragement and cynicism about themselves, their students, and the WI requirement itself.

- **Faculty burnout.** As is true elsewhere on the American higher education landscape, OSU teaching faculty have been contending for years now with steadily increasing class sizes and course loads as a result of multiple state budget cuts to higher education. This trend is especially daunting to WI faculty, who not only are charged with teaching disciplinary subject matter but also have the added responsibility (and time commitment) of providing writing instruction to their students. The difficulty of maintaining sufficient focus on students' writing in the face of everything else on their teaching (and research and service) plates can drag down even the most positive and committed WI faculty.

Student-related. Student-associated conditions that interfere with full WI program implementation at the study university parallel those of their instructors:

- **Incomplete understanding of the WI baccalaureate core requirement.** Due to inaccurate word-of-mouth information from a variety of sources—including other students, advisors, and even faculty—some students enter their WI classroom with misconceptions about the course's purpose; with severe apprehensions about their ability to complete the course successfully; with anger over "being made to write in a course that has nothing to do with writing"; and/or with the sense that this is just another hoop to jump through on the way to graduation. Although faculty are encouraged to include information about the WI requirement on their course syllabi, historically many have failed to do so.

- **Uncertainty about appropriate writing-related goals and expectations.** Just as teachers are unclear about their roles and goals as writing teachers, students may be unclear about their roles and goals as writing students in a subject-matter course. As at many other universities, Oregon State is currently converting to outcomes-based assessment, and faculty are now required to include "measurable" learning outcomes on their syllabi. But given the individualized, department-specific design and substance of WI courses, no single set of measurable writing outcomes can reasonably be applied across all courses, and some faculty do not articulate specific goals for this aspect of their students' learning experience. In the absence of such outcomes, however, the writing component of these courses may remain hazy to students.

- **Student burnout.** Students in their senior year are apt to feel overworked academically and just plain tired of taking classes—their minds are on graduation and on what comes after that. Some have already secured a job or graduate school placement and are impatient to move on. These conditions may lead to feelings of resentment about the demands of their WI course, especially when they do not realize that one of the course purposes is to prepare them for success in the workplaces they are soon to enter.

Solution Strategies

Full remediation of these interfering conditions clearly would require a multi-pronged, well-coordinated, and institutionally backed effort—an effort certainly well worth striving for. In the meantime, however, many of these conditions can also be addressed and at least partially corrected more locally, that is, through strategies applied within individual WI classrooms. Ideally, the strategies involved in such a "grassroots" approach would accomplish all of the following without requiring large additional outputs of time and effort on the part of either students or faculty:

- Help incoming WI students gain a more complete understanding of what, exactly, a WI course is and of what they can expect to give to and gain from the course; and help outgoing students more fully recognize what they have given to and gained by their participation in the course.
- Help instructors get to know their incoming students as writers, thereby facilitating instructors' efforts to identify reasonable and relevant writing expectations and goals for their WI courses and, if necessary, to fine-tune their instructional plans in order to teach more specifically to these expectations and goals.
- Include students in the outcomes-setting process for their WI course and encourage them to consider the elements of personal motivation, engagement, and personal responsibility for their learning experiences, thereby enhancing their gains as WI course participants.
- Enhance the perceived value of these upper-division courses by increasing their visible contribution to college students' successful transition into the professional workplace.

The start-of-term student writing questionnaire (STQ) piloted in this study aims to serve all four of these functions. A relatively short (~20 minutes) exercise that can be completed either in class or at home, the STQ (1) informs students about the purpose of WI courses and their generic writing requirements; (2) prompts students to consider themselves as writers in their discipline, their attitudes toward and experiences with various elements of the WI curriculum, and

their beliefs about the role(s) writing will play in their intended careers; and (3) encourages students to articulate personal writing goals for their class and to develop strategies for achieving these goals. Comprising a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions, the STQ is easy to complete and can be quickly reviewed, yet it generates a robust data set that is useful to individual respondents, their instructor, and the class as a whole—and potentially also to WI program directors, curriculum designers, and other stakeholders in the WI experience.

Elaine Maimon (1992) points out that "learning occurs at the intersection of what students already know and what they are ready to learn" (xii). As a self-reflective tool, the STQ asks students to identify and articulate what they "already know" both about where they currently stand as writers and where they want their writing to go as they transition into the workplace, which in turn allows them to take fuller advantage of opportunities in their WI course to develop their writing skills. It can also provide a concrete baseline for students' end-of-term self-evaluations of their progress in both writing and content learning during the course. Thus, use of the STQ invites students to genuinely participate as both authors and evaluators of their own WI experience.

And in contrast to the feedback provided by end-of-term course evaluations, which is helpful in the planning and design of future courses, the STQ provides WI instructors with information that better enables them to teach and respond to their *current* students' writing needs, expectations, and goals. Such information will enhance not only their students' learning but also their own teaching experience during the coming term.

Study Research Focuses

The guiding intent in developing this start-of-term writing questionnaire was to provide a practical, easy-to-use, multi-functional learning and teaching tool that would help upper-division undergraduates at the study university focus on and engage more fully with the writing component of their WI course and provide WI instructors with a rich source of information about the students enrolled in their courses. My primary study goal, then, was to pilot the tool in a variety of WI courses across the university to see how instructors and students used it and how it served these two clienteles. Drawing from these observations, I would then develop a set of best practices and recommendations that could guide future STQ use. This study goal involved two areas of research focus:

Focus 1: WI Students' Experience with the STQ

Questions related to this research focus included the following: How do upper-division college students closing in on graduation treat a survey-format, self-reflective writing-assessment and goal-setting questionnaire administered at the start of their required WI course? Do they buy into the idea of completing the STQ? What uses, if any, do they make of it? In what ways, if any, does the experience of completing the questionnaire affect their perception of, or subsequent experience in, their WI course?

Focus 2: WI Faculty Experience with the STQ

Questions related to this research focus included the following: How do WI instructors view the STQ as a teaching and learning tool? What do they perceive as benefits of using it in their classrooms? Will they respond positively to the STQ as an opportunity to add a more "adult-learner"–oriented dimension to their WI courses? Most telling, will they want to use the STQ again in the future, and if so, how might they change its content and/or their approach to using it in future courses?

In commenting on the benefits of using start-of-course questionnaires in workplace training venues, Lyndon Pugh (2003) also touches on many of my stated goals for STQ use in WI classes:

> The purposes of [such questionnaires] are to indicate attitudes; to provide some evidence of relevant knowledge and attitudes to learning; to provide material for further discussion, to lead into other activities; to point to the learning that will be covered in the event, for example dealing with the key skills to be applied or particular problems that will be investigated; and to contribute ideas for self development, and for further action by learners and facilitators after the training has ended (95-96).

Questionnaires created for these kinds of purposes, as Pugh also points out, are meant primarily "for internal use amongst the group of learners, or by the individual learners themselves. They are not designed for assessment by experts outside the group; there is little— indeed no—concern with statistical validity; [and] the replies can be understood by non-experts" (97). Nonetheless, as a tool that can be used throughout a university's WI curriculum, the STQ *is* potentially useful to WI program administrators, as well as to deans and department heads, as an opportunity to obtain the student input that, as observed earlier, tends to be a missing piece in program assessment and curricular planning. But will listening to students' voices tell us anything that we don't already know? Is the time effort invested in gathering and analyzing this

information really justified? With twenty-three WI sections involved in my pilot study, I expected to generate enough data to offer some preliminary answers to these questions. Hence, the study's third area of research focus:

Focus 3: Potential for STQ Use in WI Program Planning and Assessment

To assess this potential, I first needed to establish a process for compiling the substantial amount of data generated by the STQ and for "translating" open-ended responses into usable, quantifiable results. With this accomplished, I could examine the pilot study data with an eye toward identifying any information that might be of interest to the study university's WI program director (or other WAC practitioners) as well as noting questions, considerations, and ideas for further research that emerged during my STQ pilot study data review. Finally, I hoped to identify refinements in STQ structure and content and well as administration and collection procedures that would facilitate program-wide data collection without compromising the tool's primary function of serving students and instructors in individual WI classrooms.

Road Map for Readers

The remainder of this report discusses my research more fully, presenting both the results of this pilot study and the further issues and opportunities suggested by these results.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed description of the STQ design and contents. While the study focuses on the *concept* of the study instrument rather than its precise contents (and indeed, customization and modification of these contents by future STQ users is encouraged), readers may nonetheless wish to know the bases for the original choice of STQ contents. The Chapter 2 notes and references may be helpful to readers who are interested in using the STQ but have limited acquaintance with the writing-across-the-curriculum movement, composition theory, and/or the workplace-writing literature.

Chapter 3 characterizes the pilot study population, describes the study set-up, and explains the procedures used for STQ testing and assessment.

Chapter 4 addresses the first research focus of this study—students' experience with the STQ. Investigation of this topic involved an examination of various pilot study data, including STQ return rates, student responses to selected STQ questions, instructor feedback, and feedback obtained through an end-of-term writing self-evaluation completed by participating students. The Chapter 4 discussion offers some tentative interpretations—subject to the limitations of this

study—of the student-related pilot study results and their implications for STQ impact on student engagement and learning in WI classrooms.

Chapter 5 examines instructors' perceptions of the STQ, how they presented the tool in their classrooms, and types of follow-up activities they tried with their students. It also suggests ways faculty might choose to use the tool in the future, outside of the context and constraints of a research study. The chapter concludes with a set of guidelines for WI program directors (and faculty themselves) on how to introduce and support the tool's use so that WI faculty as well as their students will get maximum value from its use.

Chapter 6 turns to the secondary, "added-value" function of this tool, that is, its utility as an information and assessment source for third parties such as WI program directors, college deans and department heads, curriculum developers, and other program stakeholders. It provides a number of study-based examples of program-level applications for STQ data and topics for further research suggested by the pilot study results.

To conclude this report, Chapter 7 summarizes the study's main findings and best-practices and proposes several options for further development and use of the STQ as a student-centered teaching, learning, and research tool in WI courses across a university's curriculum.

CHAPTER 2:
START-OF-TERM WRITING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WI COURSES—
DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

> Self assessment can be viewed not as a distinct element of teaching and learning, but in relation to reflection, critical reflection and metacognitive practices. It is part of that set of activities which encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, monitor their learning plans and activities, process their studying and assess their effectiveness. Self assessment then would become something which is embedded in courses, designed from the very start to assist students with their learning (Boud 1995, p. 215, commenting on "the future of self assessment")

> Assessment...means gathering information in a way that shows genuine respect for individuals in the classroom. To respect people, we must listen to them—pay attention to what they have to say about their situation. (Beason and Darrow 1997, p. 98)

Introduction

Important connections between student self-evaluation and enhanced learning at all stages of schooling are noted throughout the education literature (see for example Boud 1995, Buehl 1996, Hobson 1996, and MacGregor's 1993 collection of essays on this topic). Likewise, recent composition research such as that reported in Smith and Yancey's 2000 anthology, Elizabeth Young (2000), Peggy O'Neill (1998), and Silva, Cary, and Thaiss (1999) has demonstrated a positive association between reflective self-assessment and writing skills development at all levels. For members of the writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) community, who focus on the development of writing, thinking, and learning skills along with subject-matter knowledge, these cross-disciplinary findings on the value of reflective self-assessment are noteworthy.

In addition, educators, psychologists, and academic success specialists have discovered that successful learning and task performance in both academic and professional (as well as other) arenas is enhanced by conscious goal-setting (see for example Eppler and Harju 1997, Fenwick and Parsons 2000, Kanar 2004, Locke 1996, Schunk 2003, and Zimmerman 1998). As a participatory, self-empowering learning strategy, goal-setting tends to increase students' motivation, responsibility-taking, and engagement in a given learning experience (see observations of researchers such as Kristina Anderson et al. 1996, Brophy 1987, Chang and Lorenzi 1983, and Locke 1996). Moreover, successful completion of goals tends to heighten

students' self-efficacy beliefs,[8] which also influence the levels of motivation and engagement students bring to their learning experiences (Schunk 1990 and 2003, Zimmerman 1998). All of these learner characteristics clearly are highly desirable in college classrooms and other instructional settings. Unfortunately, they also tend to be manifested only intermittently in these settings, hence the substantial body of research effort devoted to their pursuit.

In step with the foregoing observations about the value of student self-assessment and goal-setting, the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire (STQ) tested in this pilot study places these two activities front-and-center in the writing-intensive (WI) classroom.[9] The STQ—a short-answer writing survey administered on the first day of class—helps students focus reflectively on the writing component of their WI course, on themselves as writers coming into the course, and on personal writing goals that they want to accomplish during the course. The questionnaire's results can be used by both students themselves and their instructors to structure, personalize, and increase the impact of subsequent writing activities during the course. Thus, the STQ allows students to participate more fully in the construction not only of their own WI course experience but also in that of the class as a whole.

In discussing the value of self-assessment in writing improvement, O'Neill (1998) advocates a dialogic response process in which "the student writer sets the agenda [and] the topics for discussion" as an approach that can "foster more real conversation between the teacher and student writer because it allows them to negotiate, discuss, and reconsider during the conversational turn-taking" (62, 63). The STQ begins this response process even before the

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[8] As defined by social cognitive theorist Albert Bandura (1986), self-efficacy beliefs are "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (391). Frank Pajares (2002, "Overview"), who quotes Bandura's definition, goes on to say that "Self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. This is because unless people believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. Much empirical evidence now supports Bandura's contention that self-efficacy beliefs touch virtually every aspect of people's lives—whether they think productively, self-debilitatingly, pessimistically or optimistically; how well they motivate themselves and persevere in the face of adversities; their vulnerability to stress and depression, and the life choices they make. Self-efficacy is also a critical determinant of self-regulation."

[9] The self-assessment activities reported in the literature most typically are used to evaluate and reflect on in-process or completed tasks and experiences. In this study, however, self-assessment is used in conjunction with goal-setting to frame and drive a forthcoming experience. Boud (1995) notes that "assessment, in all its guises, contributes to learning and influences what students spend their time on" (207). The STQ aims to exert such influence at the front end of students' WI experience.

course has started. Moreover, distribution and use of this questionnaire on the first day of class demonstrates to students that their instructor prioritizes the course's writing component and thus provides an important model for students' own motivation and engagement with the WI curriculum.

The STQ not only constitutes a self-assessment and goal-setting tool for students but can also be a valuable information source for WI faculty and program administrators—a tool for formative instructional evaluation that may influence subsequent course curricula. As such, use of the STQ edges students away from the "empty vessel" learner role toward the participatory, horizontal-relationship role more characteristic of adult learners and "educationally powerful learning environments" (Chickering and Reisser 1993).[10] And in upper-division WI classrooms, part of whose business is to better prepare students for success in the professional workplace, incorporation of developmental teaching strategies and adult-directed training models seems eminently appropriate.

The pilot study described in this paper investigated best practices for effective STQ use both as a teaching and learning tool in individual WI classrooms and for broader program assessment and research purposes. The study findings are reported in later chapters. An informed review of these findings, however, requires some familiarity with the study instrument itself, and the current chapter provides this background information. While this study's focus is on the *concept* of the study instrument rather than its precise contents (and indeed, customization and modification of these contents by future STQ users is encouraged), it may nonetheless be useful for readers to know the reasoning behind the researcher's initial choice of questions. In the following pages, then, I will present a detailed, section-by-section description of the pilot study version of the STQ. The notes and references that accompany this discussion may be especially helpful to readers who are interested in using the STQ but have limited acquaintance with the

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[10] For differences between pre-adult schooling (pedagogy) and adult-centered teaching (andragogy), see Knowles (1980), Merriam (2001 "Andragogy"), and Slotnick et al. (1993) as well as professional training literature such as Cantor (2001), Fenwick and Parsons (2000), and Pugh (2003). As Knowles (the individual most closely associated with the theory of andragogy) himself acknowledges, the models of pedagogy and andragogy are "probably most useful when seen not as dichotomous but rather as two ends of a spectrum, with a realistic assumption in a given situation falling in between the two ends" (43)—and therefore that choice of model depends not on learner's age but rather its fit with a given situation. Chickering and Reisser's study of human development in higher education (*Education and Identity*, 1993) takes a comprehensive look at the developmental needs of college students and how the university can best serve these needs.

writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) movement, composition theory, and/or the workplace writing literature.

STQ Description

STQ Introduction

> One of the main purposes of questionnaires in practical training is to reveal what the learners think, or know, about the topic being dealt with. In the process the learners may hopefully reveal a little about themselves, understand themselves better, and become more aware of how they might need to change attitudes and behavior in the future. (Pugh 2003, p. 96)

The STQ introduction, shown in Figure 2-1, has several functions. First, it draws students' attention to the writing component of their WI course by listing the writing-related curricular requirements—information that is not always available to students in their course syllabi or other resources.[11] This introductory listing also sets up the structure of the questionnaire itself, which addresses each of these requirements section by section. The STQ introduction also explains the questionnaire's purposes and potential benefits. The tool will be most effective in WI classrooms when students understand that its primary purpose is to enhance their *own* educational experience, and their instructors' teaching experience, in the current course—not, as would be more typical for a survey questionnaire, to collect input that may enhance the experience of students and instructors in future courses. The introduction makes this point explicit.

Optimally, the information in the STQ introduction will also be presented orally during questionnaire distribution by WI course instructors who have been trained in the tool's administration and use (see recommendations in Chapters 5 and 7) and so can answer students' questions about the tool specifically and the WI requirements more generally. Including this information on the STQ itself, however, ensures that student respondents will have access to it even in the absence of accompanying discussion (a situation that might arise, for example, with STQ use in an online course or in cases where the questionnaire is distributed during a class session from which the instructor is absent).

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[11] In her discussion of university WI programs, Townsend (2001) notes that "in some scenarios, students progress through the curriculum, taking the requisite number of WI courses, without even understanding what 'WI' refers to" (238). As noted in Chapter 1, the WI concept is certainly not understood by all undergraduates or even by all faculty at the study university. The STQ's introductory text clarifies this concept for incoming WI students.

PURPOSE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

All Writing-Intensive Curriculum (WIC) courses at OSU share the following characteristics:

✓ *They are upper-division courses in which students write a minimum of 5,000 words, written work comprises at least 30% of students' grades, and writing is a major tool for learning course content.*

✓ *They focus on the kinds of writing done by professionals in related career fields.*

✓ *They include a researched and documented formal writing assignment.*

✓ *They include at least one assignment in which students revise and polish their drafts based on peer and/or instructor review. (Revisions count toward the 5,000 word course minimum.)*

✓ *They use informal writing activities to help students learn and think critically about course content.*

By asking you questions related to the items listed above, this questionnaire can help you clarify your writing expectations and intentions for this WIC course. Your responses will also assist you in identifying two personal writing goals for this course.

Additionally, the information you provide as a class may assist your instructor and department in helping you—and students in future classes—achieve your collective academic and professional goals.

Thank you, then, for your time and thought in completing this questionnaire.

Figure 2-1. STQ introduction.

STQ Body

The body of the STQ comprises six sections. Section One elicits some basic demographic information and invites students to reflect on their expectations for the WI course and on their status as academic writers going into the course. Sections Two through Five address the second-through-fifth WI course components listed in the STQ introduction. The sixth and final section asks students to synthesize their preceding responses by articulating two personal writing goals that, along with any writing outcomes included on the course syllabus, they will work to meet as the course progresses. The contents of each of these sections are described more fully in the following pages.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember in reviewing the STQ contents is that this tool is designed not as a statistical research instrument but rather as an inquiry-based teaching and learning tool whose primary goals are to (1) stimulate critical thinking on the part of respondents and (2) provide a vehicle through which instructors can access their students' perspectives and experiences. Exploration of the tool's viability for large-scale data collection and analysis was only a secondary study objective.

Section 1—College Writing Experience and Current Writing Skills

> To a considerable extent, far more than most teachers tend to believe, the quality of students' performance in various areas of the curriculum is directly tied to their views of themselves as learner/performers in that activity or discipline. So learning, at least in the sense of improving performance, requires a shift or reconstruction of self-view in a more positive, optimistic direction. It requires a personal prediction of success, or the reasonable possibility of it, coupled with a sense of how to proceed, or what to do in order to achieve success. (Parker and Goodkin 1987, p. 19)

Following some demographic questions necessary for conducting the pilot study,[12] the bulk of Section One (Figure 2-2) focuses on students' writing identity coming into their WI course. Question 5 prompts students' consideration of previous writing classes that have contributed to their development as academic writers and promotes a more conscious connection, on students' parts, between those previous experiences and their expectations and goals for their WI class. Given that the underdeveloped state of many upper-level students' academic writing skills and genre knowledge is a common complaint of WI instructors both at the study institution and elsewhere, with the blame for this situation often placed on assumed inadequacies of the institution's lower-division composition courses,[13] a review of WI students' responses to Question 5 may also provide helpful insights for WI faculty and program administrators.

Question 6 invites students to claim a position for themselves as writers within their peer group by rating their own level of writing ability relative to that of other upper-division students in their major. While students' self-ratings may not always correspond with evidence-based

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[12] The demographic questions served several purposes. First, they allowed me to identify which questionnaires were completed by the study's target audience (upper-division undergraduates using the course to fulfill their WI core requirements). Several of the WI courses involved in the study were combined undergraduate/graduate courses, and since all students in these classes were invited to complete the questionnaire, I had to be able to separate out the target student group's responses. I also wanted to confirm that the demographic composition of the undergraduate respondent group paralleled that of WI course participants at large, most of whom are seniors in the associated department/major with no prior WI course experience. Instructors who use this survey in the future solely for intra-classroom instructional purposes may not need to include these demographic questions. WI administrators who implement program-wide use of this tool may choose to include different demographic questions that are more relevant for their research and/or assessment purposes.

[13] Kaufer and Young (1993), for example, mention the "uneasy perception shared by many that the writing taught in freshman English programs is not sufficient for and is not easily adapted by student writers entering specific content areas" (95).

SECTION 1—YOUR CURRENT WRITING SKILLS

Q1. Are you an undergraduate student at OSU? (*Circle one number.*)

   1   NO ——————►   *If you are a graduate, post-bac, or non-degree seeking student, please*
   2   YES   *continue on to question Q6 now.*

Q2. What is your class standing?
   1   SENIOR
   2   JUNIOR
   3   SOPHOMORE

Q3. Is this WIC course in your major?
   1   YES
   2   NO
   3   UNDECLARED

Q4. Is this the first WIC course you have taken here at OSU?
   NOTE: WR 121, 214, and 327 are *not* WIC courses.
   1   YES
   2   NO ——————►   Q4A. If NO, how many other OSU WIC courses have you taken? _____

Q5. In the table below, please first indicate whether or not you have completed each of the following college-level writing courses either here at OSU or anywhere else. Then, for those you have taken, please indicate where. (*First indicate YES or NO; if YES, indicate where.*)

		Have taken?		*Where?*			
		NO	YES	OSU	OTHER 4--YEAR COLLEGE	COMMUNITY COLLEGE	PRE-COLLEGE COURSE
a.	First-Year/Freshman Composition (WR 121)	1	2 ——►	1	2	3	4
b.	Business Writing (WR 214)	1	2 ——►	1	2	3	NA
c.	Technical Writing (WR 327)	1	2 ——►	1	2	3	NA
d.	Other—*List course name(s) and location(s)* _____						

Q6. Which of the following*, in your opinion*, best describes your current writing skills compared to most other upper-level OSU students in your major or graduate program? (*Circle one number.*)
   1   Much stronger than most others
   2   Somewhat stronger than most others
   3   About the same as most others
   4   Somewhat weaker than most others
   5   Much weaker than most others

Q7. Do you expect to improve your writing skills as a result of taking this WIC course?
   1   YES ——————►   **Q7A. If YES, in what ways?** _____
   2   NO ——————►   **Q7B.   If NO, why not?** _____
   3   Don't know

Q8. Name two of your strengths as a writer:
   1. _____
   2. _____

Q9. Name two of your weaknesses as a writer:
   1. _____
   2. _____

Figure 2-2. STQ Section 1: "Your Current Writing Skills."

assessment, a review of these self-ratings will help instructors gain a sense of their incoming students' writing self-efficacy beliefs and identify individuals who may particularly need support and encouragement for their writing efforts during the course.

In asking students to state their expectations for writing improvement during the forthcoming WI course, Question 7 provides a forum (or venting opportunity) for students to voice their personal opinion about the value of the WI experience. Instructor review of Question 7 responses allows quick identification of any misconceptions or "off-track" course expectations harbored by the incoming cohort of WI students; students' responses to Question 7 may also prompt instructors to consider new directions for the course. By providing insight into students' valuing of and resistance to the WI requirement, Question 7 may also be an important information source for WI program planning and assessment and possibly even for broader composition research. For example, students' Question 7 responses in an upper-division WI course could be compared to entering college students' expectations for improvement in their first-year writing class, to track changes in students' views on the benefits of writing instruction during their college experience.[14]

Educational research indicates that "students' self-beliefs about their academic capabilities...are important components of motivation, self-regulation, and academic achievement" (Pajares 2002, "Self-efficacy"). Questions 8 and 9 prompt students to articulate some of these beliefs as part of a sequence of reflections that culminates in their identification of personal writing goals for the course. In self as well as instructor evaluation, affirmation of successes as well as acknowledgment of weaker performance areas is important for sustaining students' motivation and desire for continued improvement. For that reason, the opportunity for students to name not only their weaknesses but also their strengths as writers is an essential piece of the STQ.

Students' responses to STQ Questions 5–9 provide an important but often missing piece of the puzzle for WI instructors: students' own beliefs about how the course matters and what (and what not) they perceive as being in need of "fixing" in their writing. WI program administrators may also find some of this information useful for instructor training and program planning and assessment. Examples of such applications are presented in Chapter 6.

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[14] This idea was prompted by DeJoy's 2004 research, which indicated that entering college students have a fairly limited view of the benefits of writing instruction.

Section 2—Writing and Your Career

> Should the English language arts add workplace readiness to its curriculum, we would contribute both to a student's ability to earn a living and to the quality of an organization's product or services. An emphasis on English at work would help students become desirable employees, responsible employers, and resourceful entrepreneurs. Working English could help students to earn a livelihood; to work together and individually; to consider how language contributes to or impedes task accomplishment; to be sensitive to a changing marketplace while remaining true to self; and to use power and ability to accomplish tasks within ethical guidelines. (Garay 1998, "Toward a Working English," p. 48)

> The drive for improvement of skill-based tasks is often limited by the ability of the student to recognize the necessity for this improvement. (Dembo and Praks Seli 2004, cited in Chuck and Young 2004, p. 372)

In devoting, early on, an entire section to students' career goals and expectations about the role of writing in that career (Figure 2-3), the STQ reinforces for both students and faculty across the disciplines the function of the WI course as a bridge into the professional workplace and as a site for enhancing the workplace readiness Mary Sue Garay mentions in the quotation above. For while it may be impossible to fully prepare students for the experience of writing in the workplace,[15] upper-division WI courses can at least strive to familiarize students with what to expect both regarding the different conditions in which they'll be writing, the kinds of writing they'll be doing, and, perhaps most important, the role writing proficiency may play in their

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[15] For example, Hill and Resnick (1995) cite "a growing body of research in social cognition [that] suggests that tasks performed in school do not transfer well to the world outside of school." Anson and Forsberg (1990) point out that "while certain surface-level skills are 'portable' across diverse contexts, such skills are less important to making a successful transition as a writer than coping with the unfamiliar epistemological, social, and organizational characteristics of a new context. A writer in such context is in many ways 'illiterate' until he or she begins to understand these characteristics and their manifestation in written texts" (201). Thus, Knoblauch (1989) asserts that "a phenomenological argument about professional writing, which will always maintain that workplace practices are embedded in additional layers of social reality and cannot be understood—or learned—apart from them, has potential to call into serious doubt the very idea of professional writing curricula (256), and MacKinnon (1993) notes that as a source of writing skills development, working adults value "on-the-job writing" more highly than they value writing courses or training in school. Moreover, as Reither (1993) points out, college classrooms are often "dominated by assumptions and motives that are antithetical to the [workplace] vision of writing as collaborative, cooperative, social" (196) and therefore even with the most carefully designed writing curriculum, it simply may not be possible to reproduce the conditions in which "collaborative writing and revising are appropriate, efficient, even natural or necessary ways to do the work that needs doing" (197).

SECTION 2— WRITING AND YOUR CAREER

Q10. **Please list the career field in which you expect to seek employment after you complete your undergraduate degree (or after grad school, if you intend to pursue further studies.) If you have in mind a specific job position and/or employer, please list that information as well.**

    Intended career field: _____

    Specific job position and/or employer, if known: _____

    ☐ *Check here if you do not know your career field, and go to **SECTION 3, Q16** now.*

Q11. **Please indicate whether or not you expect to do each of the following kinds of writing in the career field listed above. *Indicate YES or NO by circling one number for each item. List any additional items in the "Other" option.***

Will your work include this kind of writing?	YES	NO
a. Correspondence via letters, memos, emails, etc.	1	2
b. Web page texts for Internet audiences	1	2
c. Reports or briefs	1	2
d. Process documentation (lab reports, instructional manuals, etc.)	1	2
e. Press releases	1	2
f. Journal articles or books	1	2
g. Advertising copy or marketing texts	1	2
h. Project or grant proposals	1	2
i. Other (*Please specify*) _____		

Q12. **In your opinion, how important are strong writing skills to success in the career field you listed in Q10?** (*Circle one number.*)
    1   VERY IMPORTANT
    2   SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
    3   NOT VERY IMPORTANT

Q13. **List three characteristics of "good writing" in the career field you listed in Q10.**
    a.   _____
    b.   _____
    c.   _____

Q14. **In your intended career, what is your best guess as to the portion of your workplace writing that you'll produce *collaboratively* (i.e., several writers will contribute to the final document)?**
    1   MORE THAN HALF
    2   ONE-FOURTH TO ONE-HALF
    3   LESS THAN ONE-FOURTH

Q15. **In your intended career, what is your best guess as to the percentage of your own workplace writing that will be reviewed by your peers and/or managers, and possibly returned for revision, prior to its "public" release?**
    1   LESS THAN 25%
    2   25-50 %
    3   MORE THAN 50%

Figure 2-3. STQ Section 2: "Writing and Your Career."

employability and career advancement.[16] Because students approaching the end of their college careers are often more mentally and emotionally focused on their post-graduation plans than on current academics, instructional strategies that explicitly connect the two may lead to more productive and satisfying course experiences for both students and teachers. By prompting students to reflect on the role of writing in their future careers, STQ Section Two yields information that may assist instructors in developing such strategies.

As seen in Figure 2-3, the section begins by asking students to list their career intentions as specifically as possible. For some students, this may constitute an important move toward claiming a professional identity. For others, publicly stating their career intentions may heighten their sense of personal responsibility for doing the work it takes to realize those intentions— including work on their communication skills. In any case, students' responses to Question 10 provide a context for their responses to the following questions in Section Two.

Question 10 is a valuable information source for WI instructors. Most teaching faculty can probably identify the professional paths most commonly pursued by graduates in their discipline. However, awareness of specific career goals of their incoming students allows them to target their lectures, discussions, assignments, and even exams more specifically to these students as a way of increasing students' interest in and engagement with the course material. Explicitly connecting course material to students' stated career goals also demonstrates instructors' interest in their students as individuals and their commitment to helping these individuals succeed in their lives beyond the WI classroom. [17]

WI program administrators may also find uses for the information generated by Question 10. For example, the question helps determine how many students enrolled in WI courses actually *have* an intended career; such information may influence subsequent decisions about the workplace writing aspect of the WI curriculum.

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[16] Paul Anderson's (1985) research on writing at work led to a series of teaching recommendations for career-related writing courses that are just as applicable today as they were in 1985. Specifically, he proposed that such courses should (1) "explain to students that writing will probably play a large and important role in [their] careers, regardless of the students' majors," (2) "focus on general writing strategies that students can apply in a variety of work-related rhetorical situations," (3) "teach students how to write communications that people in the workplace will perceive to be clear, concise, well-organized, and grammatically correct," and (4) "provide students with instruction and practice in work for a variety of kinds of readers...and in a variety of kinds of communication" (75-77 *passim*).

[17] Admittedly, however, making these explicit connections may require extra work on the part of WI instructors. As Garay (1998, "Toward a Working English") observes, "maximizing students' ability to earn a livelihood requires teachers to learn about the workplace" (45).

The remaining questions in Section Two focus on students' expectations about the role of writing in their intended career with the goal of bringing that role into greater focus and helping students identify important areas of writing improvement on which to focus during their WI course. For instructors, students' responses to Questions 11–15 may provide useful background information for class discussions and activities related to workplace writing. Each of these questions is discussed more specifically in the following paragraphs.

Paul Anderson's (1985) quantitative research and Anne Beaufort's (1999) ethnographic research both reveal that one of the most significant differences between college and workplace writing is the far greater variety of rhetorical situations and communication genres encountered in the workplace. Question 11 is aimed at making this key difference visible to students at the front end of their WI experience; it also provides instructors with a starting place for discussion and exploration of discipline-related workplace writing functions and genres.

Note: The current genre listing in Question 11, which represents an effort to encompass writing forms encountered across the broad range of professions pursued by undergraduates at the study university, was influenced by Paul Anderson's 1985 report and also by more recent studies such as the 2004 and 2005 National Commission on Writing reports and Gray, Emerson, and MacKay (2005). Instructors who plan to use the STQ in their classrooms may wish to substitute genre listings more specific to their own discipline[18]; expansion of this listing to include oral and visual genres as well as written and electronic ones might also be considered.[19]

It is probably safe to assume that most upper-division college students, regardless of intended career field, are aware of the strong connection between good communication skills and

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[18] Instructor familiarity with these genres should not automatically be assumed; as Paul Anderson (1985) points out, "[the] special forms [of writing] their students will use at work...may not be the ones [instructors] use in courses in their major departments" (77). Thus, assistance in compiling genre listings for specific disciplines could be an important aspect of WI program support. Sources of this support might include department alumni and advisory boards. Alternatively, Ede and Lunsford's "Survey of Writing in the Professions," found in *Singular Texts/Plural Authors* (1990), includes a comprehensive print-genre listing that could be applied across disciplines.

[19] Because this questionnaire focuses specifically on writing, the pilot version did not include oral or visual presentation genres. But because of these genres' predominance in contemporary business communications (see National Commission on Writing 2004, 2005); because of the integral relationship between oral communication and written documents in the workplace (Beaufort 1999); and because of the increasing incorporation of oral and visual (as well as electronic) communications into WAC curricula (as evidenced by the growing number of programs that have replaced the term "Writing across the Curriculum" with "Communications across the Curriculum"), their inclusion in future versions of the STQ is recommended.

professional success, a link that has been documented in countless studies, articles, and professional writing textbooks.[20] Acknowledging this connection "out loud" in Question 12, however, may increase students' sense of accountability for doing something about it in their WI course. For WI teachers and program administrators, this question may also help identify disciplinary areas and career orientations in which the connection is less clearly seen.

Question 13 follows up on a 1996 survey of faculty and students at the study institution ("Writing Criteria") that flagged certain discrepancies in students and instructors' characterizations of "excellent" engineering writing (specifically regarding the place of "creativity" in engineering texts).[21] Students, instructors, and WI program directors may all benefit from comparing students' Question 13 responses to criteria reported in workplace writing literature by researchers such Paul Anderson (1985); Anne Beaufort (1999); Gray, Emerson, and MacKay (2005); Elizabeth Jones (1994); Sally Robinson (1998); the 2004 and 2005 National Commission on Writing reports, and/or other published sources, including current technical/professional writing texts (for example see Houp et al. 2006).[22]

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[20] Gray, Emerson, and MacKay's (2005) research indicates that students more fully appreciate the importance of good writing skills to their future careers than is commonly assumed. However, doubters of the critical role of writing proficiency in students' future employability and advancement should consider the following statistics reported in the 2004 and 2005 National Commission on Writing reports on surveys of major U.S. corporation and state government employers, respectively: Two-thirds of the responding corporate employers and 100% of responding state employers viewed writing as an important responsibility for salaried/professional employees. Half of the responding corporate employers and 80% of the responding state employers reported taking writing into consideration when hiring professional workers. About 85% of both corporate and state respondents reported that poorly written applications would count against professional job applicants. Half of the corporate respondents and 60% of the state respondents agreed that writing is "frequently" or "almost always" a consideration in employee promotion.

[21] But even when students identify the same top qualities as instructors or employers, they may have a different opinion about just how important those top qualities are. Gray, Emerson, and MacKay (2005) report the interesting finding that while the students and employer participants in their study came up with a virtually identical order of importance for a 15-item list of workplace writing skills, in all but one case the value students assigned each of these attributes (on a scale of 1–7) was lower than the value employers assigned to the attribute.

[22] Paul Anderson (1985) identifies the five most important "general" workplace writing skills as being the abilities to "write clearly, write concisely, organize well, write grammatically, and spell correctly" (53). Other important general writing skills identified in Anderson's review include clear statement of a text's purpose and good use of visuals. In Jones's 1994 study, policymakers, employers, and instructors all agreed that texts produced by college graduates should be grammatically correct, audience-appropriate, and concise, and should reflect the abilities to use both active and passive voice, define technical terms, and use correct reference

In making the most of their WI course, students' awareness of the textual qualities valued in the workplace is important; also important is their awareness of the processes by which such texts are produced—specifically (in contrast to many students' experience of academic writing) the frequency with which collaboration and document review are incorporated into these processes (Paul Anderson 1985, Beaufort 1999, Couture and Rymer 1989 and 1993, Ede and Lunsford 1990, and Kleimann 1993 all cite these practices; Couture and Rymer 1993 and Spilka 1993 also note the frequency with which workplace writers utilize face-to-face consultations with peers and supervisors throughout the composing process when completing non-routine writing tasks).[23] STQ Questions 14 and 15 are included not to test students' (or faculty's) ability to come

forms and language conventions specific to the associated discipline or profession. In the National Commission on Writing's 2005 survey, 92–100% of respondents cited accuracy; solid spelling, grammar, and punctuation; clarity; well-documented and supported writing; concision; logic; and visual appeal as important or extremely important features of good writing. Gray, Emerson, and MacKay (2005) and Robinson (1998) document the importance of writing efficiency, including succinctness, the ability "to get to the point right away," and the ability to write to deadlines. Audience awareness and the associated need for adaptability of writing style and format are also at the top of many researchers' lists. Beaufort (1999) identifies the following "norms for genres" in workplace discourse: "Expediency more important than originality," "text should be very clear, easy to read quickly," and "manipulation of facts for persuasive purpose is acceptable, even expected" (Table 7-1, p. 184).

[23] In Question 14, for the sake of establishing a common basis for students' responses, I define "collaboratively produced writing" as the situation in which "several writers will contribute to the final document." This closely echoes Deborah Bosley's (1989) definition (quoted in Ede and Lunsford 1990, p. 15): "Collaborative writing is defined as two or more people working together to produce one written document in a situation in which a group takes responsibility for having produced the document." But many composition theorists and researchers prefer a more comprehensive definition. Couture and Rymer (1989), for example, observe that "'collaboration' is the broad term currently used to designate writing in which more than one person contributes to the effort, but the nature of each participant's interaction with others and 'contribution' to the end product are far from clarified" (73). Debs (1993) points out that "most studies of the social activities involved in writing in the workplace...have argued for a broadening of the definition of collaboration [to go beyond] meaning simply 'writing together'" (158). Ede and Lunsford (1990) first define writing as "any of the activities that lead to a completed document [including] written and spoken brainstorming, outlining, note-taking, organizational planning, drafting, revising, and editing" and then define *group writing* (their preferred term) as encompassing "any writing done in collaboration with one or more persons" (14). As another complicating angle to consider in pinpointing collaborative writing, refer also to Ede and Lunsford's discussion of hierarchical and dialogic collaborations (1990, p. 433–36). Note too that some social constructivists, such as James Reither, see *all* writing as essentially collaborative, because (per Reither 1993) "whether or not authors literally write and revise together...writing always occurs as a dialogic process, in situations where everyone who writes does so with two implicit or explicit aims: first, to build on others' knowledge to make 'new'

up with a "correct" answer (as far as I know there is none) but rather to draw students' closer attention to these practices and their relevance to a workplace-readying curriculum.[24] Follow-up class discussion of the role and nature of collaboration and peer review in workplace writing may also motivate students to take participation in these activities in the context of their WI course more seriously.[25]

SECTION 3—Formal Writing Process

> When writing in their chosen fields, students were aware that the body of existing knowledge and the conventions of the field were factors in how they researched and wrote. Their perception that specific writing and research tasks were preparing them for their future careers cast a high-stakes aura around writing in the major. They regarded their experiences with research assignments as indicators of probable success in the field. (Hilgers, Hussey, and Stitt-Bergh 1999, p. 325–26)

STQ Section Three (Figure 2-4) turns students' attention to the "capstone," high-stakes writing task required in all WI courses at the study university: a multiple-draft, documented research paper, report, proposal, or other researched formal document.[26] Question 16 is designed

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knowledge or otherwise bring about change within discourse communities, and second, to provide 'written knowledge'...for others to build on" (197–98).

[24] Still, it may be useful to explore these and other questions in this section with professionals working in students' intended career fields, for example by sending a set of questions that parallel those in STQ Section Two to members of a department's advisory board or by having students themselves consult with local industry or government representatives. Development of "industry writing questionnaires" that complement the STQ might be a helpful WI program support activity. The "Writing in the Professions" survey developed by Ede and Lunsford (1990) might serve as one model for such questionnaires.

[25] In making the case for peer-review skills development in "work-readying" WI classrooms, it should also be noted that in the workplace, peer assessment is not limited to writing projects but extends all the way to performance evaluation, as shown by the increasing popularity of practices such as 360-degree feedback and employee–manager reviews (Fenwick and Parsons 2000). Thus, learning how to critique colleagues' work, both generously and constructively, is truly a work-readying experience—the process, as Fenwick and Parsons also note, entails development of "valuable skills in observation, interpretation, and communication" (223).

[26] In many cases, instructors design this assignment to mirror a "real-world" document such as a technical report or grant proposal, thereby fulfilling the study university's WI curricular requirement of addressing types of writing practiced by professionals within the major field. But even when not explicitly connected with workplace writing, the cross-over value of the disciplinary writing tasks involved in this assignment may be visible both to students and their future employers. Hilgers, Hussey, and Stitt-Bergh (1999) report that in post-course assessments, their WI student interviewees "particularly valued research-related writing assignments in the major as opportunities for professional skills development and identity building" (317). Gray, Emerson, and MacKay's 2005 research on science-specific writing programs as preparation for

SECTION 3—WRITING DOCUMENTED RESEARCH PAPERS

Q16. **With which of these aspects of the research paper-writing process (in any field) do you typically experience problems?** *For each item, indicate YES, NO, or Never Required (NR).*

	A problem for you?	YES	NO	Never Required
a.	Coming up with a workable topic—i.e., one that's interesting to both you and your audience, neither too narrow nor too broad, and truly controversial (if applicable)	1	2	NR
b.	Locating sources through library and/or Web-based research	1	2	NR
c.	Organizing the information and presenting it in a logical sequence	1	2	NR
d.	Generating the first draft of your paper	1	2	NR
e.	Writing the introduction and/or conclusion	1	2	NR
f.	Sticking to the topic; identifying and omitting extraneous information	1	2	NR
g.	Creating smooth transitions between paragraphs and sections	1	2	NR
h.	Incorporating and citing tables and figures in your text	1	2	NR
i.	Incorporating and citing referenced information in your text	1	2	NR
j.	Revising your draft after instructor, peer, and/or your own review	1	2	NR
k.	Finding and correcting grammar and spelling errors within your text	1	2	NR
l.	Using an appropriate tone and writing style for your intended audience	1	2	NR
m.	Following the assignment specifications for format, length, style, audience, etc.	1	2	NR
n.	Establishing and maintaining a research and writing schedule that gives you enough time to produce the best paper you can	1	2	NR
o.	Other (please specify) _____			

Figure 2-4. STQ Section 3: "Writing Documented Research Papers."

to help students get the most out of this capstone opportunity by identifying (for both themselves and their instructor) aspects of research-paper writing that they expect will be problematic and in which they may need instructional support.

As with the Question 11 list of workplace writing genres, this list of paper-writing skills is meant to apply to a broad range of writing projects, so all of the listed items will not necessarily be apropos to every WI class. For example, "coming up with a workable topic" may be irrelevant for an engineering report, whereas "incorporating and citing tables and figures" may not apply in an English literature research essay.

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workplace success suggests that "even if the production of a formal report is not required in every workplace, the array of skills developed by report writing renders it a tool of ongoing value in college science education." In particular, the employers in that study highly valued the abilities to "collect information from a variety of sources" and "condense information from a variety of sources and convey it clearly"—both skills that are "significantly developed in students by the particular tasks involved in researching and structuring a report" (433).

While time-management isn't normally identified as a "writing skill" per se, poor time management during the writing process is frequently cited, by students and faculty alike, as a primary reason for mediocre writing-assignment results. Thus, "establishing and maintaining a research and writing schedule that gives you enough time to produce the best paper you can" is included in the Question 16 listing to remind students of the significance of this factor in their writing success.

The multiple-choice format used for Question 16 allows straightforward identification of the most prominent writing problem areas both within and across WI classrooms and majors. Thus, as well as helping individual faculty determine the most appropriate areas of instructional emphasis for a given section of WI students, responses to Question 16 may also help a WI director to identify variations among the writing problem areas identified by students in different majors and colleges, perhaps resulting in more targeted development of faculty resources and training opportunities.

SECTION 4—Revising and Peer Review

Although a draft represents an initial attempt to express a message, most writers don't find its meaning and form until they've reviewed the draft. Students need time to let their compositions grow. They need to examine every level of the discourse, review the decisions they made, and incorporate responses from teachers and other students. (Lindemann 1995, p. 204)

Although peer assessment contains inherent problems, including a re-structuring of power relationships and the breaking away from the tradition of assessment by experts, when done well peer assessment has great potential for improving learning. It is also an important way to help people develop critical learning skills, including the skills of evaluating oneself and others regularly, critically and appreciatively, using defensible criteria, and forming follow-up action plans for further learning. (Fenwick and Parsons 2000, p. 223)

At the study university, revision is a required component of all WI courses, and the university's WI program encourages the use of peer review both in order to ease instructors' paper load and as an effective vehicle for student writing improvement. STQ Section Four (Figure 2-5) explores students' understanding of and experience with both of these practices.

Question 17 asks students how they would describe the process of "revising a draft" to someone who had no idea of what that phrase meant. By posing the question this way, I hoped to elicit fuller accounts of respondents' own revision practices than might be obtained simply by requesting them to define the word "revision." The point of this question is to ensure that

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SECTION 4—REVISING

Q17. **If someone were to ask you *"What does 'revising a draft' mean?"*— what would you tell them?**

Q18*.* ***In courses within or related to your major,*** **how many times have you revised and re-submitted drafts of your papers following peer and/or instructor review?**
    1   NEVER ⟶ *If you answered NEVER, please go on to **SECTION 5, Q22** now.*
    2   1 time
    3   2-3 times
    4   More than 3 times

Q19. **In revising drafts of your papers in courses within or related to your major, how helpful have you have found *PEER* feedback?**
    1   VERY HELPFUL
    2   SOMEWHAT HELPFUL
    3   MOSTLY UNHELPFUL
    4   ENTIRELY UNHELPFUL
    5   NA (Never received peer feedback)

Q20. **In revising drafts of your papers in courses within or related to your major, how helpful have you have found *INSTRUCTOR* feedback?**
    1   VERY HELPFUL
    2   SOMEWHAT HELPFUL
    3   MOSTLY UNHELPFUL
    4   ENTIRELY UNHELPFUL
    5   NA (Never received instructor feedback)

Q21. **Are there notable differences between the ways you use instructor feedback and peer feedback on your writing?**
    1   NO
    2   YES ⟶ **Q21A. If YES, please describe these differences in the space below.**

Figure 2-5. STQ Section 4: "Revising."

students articulate their understanding of this aspect of the writing process prior to engaging in the actual task during their WI course. Their responses to Question 17 will allow instructors to gauge the amount of review or even direct instruction in revision needed by their current section of WI students.

    At institutions where revision is a curricular requirement for WI courses, WI faculty as well as students ideally will have a common understanding of what this writing activity entails. For WI program directors, then, students' responses to Question 17 may provide an interesting springboard for faculty discussions and workshops designed to establish this common understanding.

For researchers, a broad-based sampling of responses to this question may provide further insight on college students' views of revision. Beeson and Darrow (1997) note that the common opinion among compositionists is that most college students "see revision as merely 'cleaning up' a text and avoid global revision" (105). In Nancy Sommers' (1992) estimation, students tend to view revision mostly as a matter of rewording. Responses to Question 17 will help determine whether these conclusions hold for upper-division WI students.

Questions 18–21 ask students to report on their prior experience with revision, and more specifically on their experience with and opinions of peer and instructor responses to assignment drafts. These questions give students an opportunity to consider what (if anything) they value in both peer and instructor review of their writing and to articulate any differences in the ways they use these two sources of feedback. This information will be helpful to WI instructors, especially those who plan to incorporate peer review into their course, and will also be of interest to WI program directors and others involved in composition research, assessment, and pedagogy. It is noteworthy, for example, that while peer response is widely utilized by both industry professionals and academicians for text production and other purposes (including performance reviews), student writers appear to have mixed reactions to this practice (see for example the observations of Chuck and Young 2004, Fenwick and Parsons 2000, Helfers et al. 1999, and Saito and Fujita 2004). Students' responses to the questions in STQ Section 4 may offer researchers additional insights on this phenomenon.

Note: As currently worded, the questions in Section Four deal specifically with students' experiences with revision and response of writing assignments *within their major.* However, pilot study results suggest that some respondents may have missed this distinction when completing the questionnaire.[27] Future users of the STQ who consider the distinction worthwhile may want to emphasize it more heavily in both the questionnaire text and accompanying oral instructions.

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[27] In some sections, students who would have gone through exactly the same major courses, with the same instructors and assignments, provided varying responses for number of times they had revised their papers in prior major courses, which led me to think that some students may also have counted revision activities in non-major courses.

SECTION 5—Writing-To-Learn

> When students understand the relationship between learning and writing and are engaged in routine writing practice using the tools of critical thinking, they are able to learn content at deeper and deeper levels. They gradually improve their ability to write with clarity and depth. They become more skilled in communicating important ideas. (Paul and Elder 2005, p. 40)

> The use of writing as a learning tool can...provide an important basis for fostering general skills that future experts need in the symbolic-analytic or knowledge-intensive jobs of the information society such as abstraction, communication and collaboration skills, systemic thinking, critical thinking skills, analyzing and synthesizing skills as well as metacognitive and reflective skills. (Tynjälä 2001, p. 14)

The writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) movement historically has had two major strands: writing in the disciplines, or WID, which focuses on developing and demonstrating the genre knowledge and writing skills specific to a given discipline; and "writing-to-learn" (WTL), the metacognitive use of writing to think critically and to construct, critique, synthesize, and transform content knowledge.[28] Noting an increasing de-emphasis on the WTL strand by many WAC practitioners, Leanne Warshauer (2005) suggests by way of explanation that this strand is "not the part of the movement that sells." In some cases, the relative lack of emphasis on this strand might also result from a lack of familiarity with the writing-to-learn concept and applications on the part of faculty who are charged with incorporating writing instruction into their content courses. At the study university, for example, inclusion of informal, minimally graded WTL activities is a basic requirement for all WI courses, but instructors who have not participated in the introductory WI seminar, which provides formal training in WTL practices, may give this requirement only cursory treatment in their classes or identify traditional activities like "taking notes on class lectures" as the extent of WTL in the course.[29] Thus, while drawing students' attention to writing-to-learn, the questions in STQ Section Five (Figure 2-6)—and

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[28] Some authors go so far as to conflate WAC and WTL and to set WID apart as an entirely separate enterprise from WAC. Ochsner and Fowler (2004), for example, posit that WAC (which according to their research is most often incorporated in lower-division undergraduate curricula) "stresses the metacognition of learning to learn, whereas WID focuses more on teaching a biology major to write like a biologist, a history major to write like a historian, an engineering major like an engineer, an accounting major like a CPA" (119).

[29] Tynjälä's (2001) observations about writing as a learning tool, which include the conclusion that "it is questionable whether reproductive ways of using writing have any benefits

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SECTION 5—WRITING TO LEARN

Q22. Are you acquainted with the term "writing-to-learn"?

    1   NO

    2   YES ⟶   **Q22A. If YES, what is your understanding of this term?**

                       _____

Q23. Which, if any, of the following informal writing strategies have been helpful in your academic studies and/or other areas of your life? *For each strategy, indicate YES, NO, or Never Tried (NT).*

Strategy Helpful?	YES	NO	Never Tried
a. Journal or notebook for reflection, problem-solving, record-keeping...........	1	2	NT
b. Freewriting or brainstorming to generate ideas and questions	1	2	NT
c. Using outlines or other idea-grouping techniques to organize thoughts and information	1	2	NT
d. Note-taking during lectures or reading assignments	1	2	NT
e. Summarizing or paraphrasing a key concept, an oral presentation, a passage from your reading, etc.	1	2	NT
f. Generating test questions as a stud strategy	1	2	NT
g. Responding to writing prompts about course readings or lecture material	1	2	NT
h. In-class writing activities ("write-and-pass," "minute papers," etc.)..............	1	2	NT
i. Other (please specify) _____			

Q24. In your academic studies (or other areas of your life), how likely are you to use informal writing as an exploratory tool to help clarify your thoughts, solve problems, learn new concepts, etc.?

    1   VERY LIKELY

    2   SOMEWHAT LIKELY

    3   NOT AT ALL LIKELY

Figure 2-6. STQ Section 5: "Writing to Learn."

students' responses to them—may also help increase faculty awareness of and interest in using this metacognitive, content-mastery-focused application for writing.

The section starts out by establishing whether students are acquainted with and able to define the term "writing-to-learn." While some WTL practices are certainly utilized in lower-division composition courses at the study university, they are usually billed as "pre-writing" or "invention" activities, not as "writing-to-learn." And while the terminology is explained and used in the study university's WI workshops and seminars, it appears only infrequently in the

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for learning, and ... they may even deteriorate students' writing performance" (18) clearly put such WTL requirement "solutions" into question.

university's published WI requirements and resources, which more often refer to "informal" or "ungraded/minimally graded" writing. Thus, the term may also be unfamiliar to some WI faculty at the study institution. How important it is that all WI students and teachers know this exact term may be open to debate, but certainly putting a name to a practice increases the visibility and facilitates discussion and perhaps also implementation of the practice, and that is one of the motives for including Question 22 in the STQ.

Question 23 gives students an opportunity to express their preferences for various types of informal writing. The list used in the pilot study version of the STQ comprises a representative sampling of writing-to-learn practices, including some (note-taking and outlining) that most typically are used for recording and memorizing delivered knowledge but that can also be tools for questioning, building onto, and transforming such knowledge. Russell (2000) notes that "students who are not motivated or challenged by a genre of writing do not profit from it, and some genres of writing support some kinds of learning better than others" (260). The choice of writing-to-learn approaches to be used in a given WI course is ultimately the instructor's call, of course. But students' responses to Question 23 (whose listing of WTL strategies can of course be modified) might help an instructor identify the most promising options.

Question 24 serves both to remind students that the use of WTL/informal writing is not limited to college classrooms and as an opportunity for students to assess their own inclination to use writing for problem-solving and knowledge-building. Tynjälä (2001) notes that in addition to composition theory, cognitive and sociocultural research on learning and language development also supports the use of writing as a learning tool; and Paul and Elder (2005) assert that "it is imperative for students to understand the integral relationship between writing and learning, to understand that one cannot be a skilled thinker and a poor writer" (41). Other researchers (Ackerman 1993, Ochsner and Fowler 2004, and Smagorinsky 1995, to name a few) question the privileging of writing over other modes of learning and argue that the strength of this integral relationship may vary among students in a given classroom as well as among cohorts of students in different majors, institutional settings, and cultural backgrounds—and thus that in at least some circumstances the emphasis on writing to learn may be disproportionate to its cognitive value for

the collective body of learners. [30] STQ Question 24 seeks input on this issue from incoming WI students themselves.

SECTION 6—Individual Goal Setting

> Goals motivate people to exert extra effort and persist, and they focus people's attention on relevant task features and the strategies that will help them accomplish the task (Schunk 2003, p. 163)

> Students...learn more, generally speaking, when they can not only play a role in choosing or defining the topics they pursue, but also in selecting the means to pursue those topics. (Parker and Goodkin 1987, p. 17)

The sixth and final section of the STQ (Figure 2-7), a goal-setting exercise, helps students synthesize the knowledge gained through self-reflection in the previous sections and gives this knowledge a practical dimension. It also helps position students as the primary authors of their forthcoming WI experience.

To begin the exercise, students are prompted to think about the kinds of writing they expect to do, and the kind of writer they want to be, in their first job. Next, they are asked to consider their current levels of competency in these skills as compared to the performance levels they anticipate will be expected of them in the workplace. Finally, students are instructed to formulate two individual writing goals that would help close any of their identified competency gaps and to record these goals both on the questionnaire and on their course syllabus. As suggested by the quote from Parker and Goodkin above, self-selection of the strategies for pursuing a learning goal is as important for enhanced learning as selecting the goal itself. Thus, the Section Six instructions also advise students that regardless of whether their individual goals coincide with or differ from the course writing outcomes specified on the syllabus, students themselves are expected to assume primary responsibility for determining the strategies by which they will work to achieve these personal goals.

Goal-setting has been associated with increased persistence (the amount of time and/or effort a student willingly devotes to a task) (Dweck 1986); is a fundamental ingredient in self-regulated learning and important in self-efficacy development (Cho 2004, Schunk 1990, Schunk and Zimmerman 1998); and enhances performance, learning, and motivation (Locke 1996). For

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[30] Klein's 1999 examination of cognitive processes in writing-to-learn also focuses not on *whether* writing contributes to learning but rather on "*when* writing contributes to learning, *how* does it do so?" (206).

SECTION 6—SETTING INDIVIDUAL WRITING GOALS FOR YOUR WIC COURSE

Q25. This WIC course is an excellent place to develop and strengthen writing skills that are relevant to your major—skills that will increase your employability and contribute to your professional success regardless of your chosen career. To make the most of this opportunity, set some personal writing goals for your WIC course, as follows:

> *Think for a few moments about the kinds of writing you expect to do in your first job after graduation. Think, too, about the kind of writer you want to be in your first job.*

> *Next, think about any gaps that exist between your current writing skills and those you want—or will need—to have in your future workplace. To close these gaps, what needs to change about your writing?*

> *With these thoughts in mind, formulate two writing goals that **you** want to achieve in this WIC class.*

> *NOTE: These goals may or may not coincide with your instructor's specified writing goals for this course. Whether they do coincide is not important. These are your **individual writing goals** for this class, and the strategies you develop for achieving them will be largely up to you.*

> *Finally, **record your two writing goals both in the box below and on your course syllabus.***

My two writing goals for this class are:

1.

2.

Q26. Please use the remaining space to make any comments you may have about WIC courses in general, this course specifically, and/or this questionnaire. Thank you again for completing the questionnaire.

Figure 2-7. STQ Section 6: "Setting Individual Writing Goals for Your WI Course."

goal-setting to produce these positive results, however, the established goals need to be specific; challenging while also realistic; achievable in the given timeframe; and perceived as important by the goal-setter (Locke 1996, Schunk 1990). Thus, the STQ reminds students to set writing-specific learning goals that matter to them personally, that they can identify strategies for achieving, and that they believe they can make real progress on in the time frame of their WIC course. Vague goals such as "improve my writing" and performance goals such as "ace this course" are therefore not appropriate responses to Question 25.

Also important for deriving benefits from goal-setting is goal follow-up and feedback (Schunk 1990). Students are therefore asked to record their goals on their syllabus as well as on the STQ itself, so that even after turning in the questionnaire to their instructor, they will be able to easily reference these goals throughout the term. Instructors may benefit in a number of ways from reviewing their students' personal writing goals. For example, such a review will allow WI instructors to better understand what their students value as writers, calibrate the congruence of student goals and course learning outcomes, and adjust course assignments as appropriate. (Such information may also be useful to WI directors as well as deans and department heads in program planning and assessment.) By holding students accountable for their personal writing goals—for example by using these goals as response criteria for writing assignments throughout the term, incorporating them into peer review activities, and including them in end-of-term assessments evaluation activities—instructors can help communicate and model the value of personal goals in the learning experience.

One of the many helpful recommendations provided by the OSU Survey Research Center during STQ construction was to end the survey with an invitation for respondents to articulate anything still on their minds related to the STQ itself, their forthcoming WI course, or the WI requirement more generally. Question 26 issues this invitation. For respondents, this "venting opportunity" provides closure to the experience of completing the STQ and reinforces the message that respondents' unique experiences and perspectives are valued by those who administer and review the questionnaire. The question gives students a chance to voice issues and concerns that are not explicitly addressed by the STQ but are nonetheless important for course planning and program assessment. In providing a clear opening for all kinds of feedback, negative as well as positive, Question 26 also acknowledges the possibility that, as Ackerman (1993) puts it, "a learner turning against an idea, a writing assignment, a teacher's or school's demeanor can, of course, be another form of learning" (316).

The primary aim of the STQ is to engage students more fully as participants in their own WI experience—to emphasize to students that WI course "ownership" is largely in their own hands, as is the accountability for making the experience work for them. To echo Larry Beason and Laurel Darrow's message from the beginning of this chapter, STQ respondents will be more inclined to take this call to ownership seriously knowing that those who have issued it are truly willing to listen attentively and respectfully to *all* that is on their minds as they begin to chart their WI course.

CHAPTER 3:
METHODOLOGY

> For college students, the motivational force—the stimulus value—of a course, curriculum, or climate, depends on the students' past experiences and current purposes. (Chickering and Reisser 1993, p. 474)

Chapter Overview

This study investigated the use of a start-of-term student writing questionnaire (STQ) in upper-division writing-intensive (WI) courses across the curriculum at a state land-grant university. The STQ was developed as a tool for enhancing both the learning experience of the broad range of students enrolled in these WI courses and their instructors' experiences of teaching these courses. The tool's purpose is to prompt self-reflection by students on their writing strengths and weaknesses going into the WI class, on the kinds of writing they anticipate doing in their intended careers, and on their prior experience with, and current attitudes toward, aspects of the writing process emphasized in WI courses. The STQ also encourages students to identify several personal writing goals for their WI class. The contents of this tool were presented and discussed in Chapter 2.

The STQ was piloted in 23 upper-division WI classrooms across all undergraduate colleges at the study university, and its effectiveness as a course enhancement tool was assessed through follow-up surveys given to both students and instructors and through face-to-face debriefing interviews with participating faculty. This chapter describes the pilot study methodology, beginning with a characterization of the study population and then describing the procedures and instruments used for STQ testing and assessment.

Study Population

Institutional Context

Oregon State University (OSU) is a comprehensive public Research 1 university and the state's land-grant, sea-grant, space-grant, and sun-grant institution. Its main campus is in Corvallis, about 80 miles south of Portland; additional OSU facilities and campuses are located throughout the state. About 19,000 students, primarily from the Pacific Northwest but also from other parts of the United States and abroad, are currently enrolled at OSU. The university includes thirteen schools and colleges and offers over 200 undergraduate and 80 graduate programs. The university's baccalaureate core curriculum ensures that all OSU undergraduates in

all majors participate in a common set of courses that cultivates their awareness of the arts, sciences, world cultures, and diversity issues and furthers their skills in creative and critical thinking and in writing—including writing within their major discipline(s).

Faculty Participants

The 22 instructors who participated in this study all taught one or more sections of a writing-intensive course in one of the university's eight undergraduate-degree-awarding colleges during the 10-week term in which this study was conducted (Winter 2004). Sixteen of these instructors had previously received formal WI training through participation in the university's introductory WI faculty seminar.[31] About half of the instructors who participated in this study also regularly attended the ongoing WI lunchtime workshops and advanced WI seminars offered at OSU. Twenty of the instructor participants—five full professors, four associate professors, four assistant professors, six instructors, and one endowed chair—were full-time faculty within their respective departments, reflecting the university's policy that, when possible, WI courses should be taught by regular teaching faculty within the department. Completing the participant pool were a post-doctoral student with several terms of WI teaching experience and a graduate teaching assistant who, while a first-time WI instructor, was an experienced writing teacher with a strong rhetoric and composition background.

Student Participants

According to the data provided by participating instructors, student enrollment for all WI sections involved in the study was about 535, with the following distribution: graduate and post-baccalaureate students, 3%; seniors, 80%; juniors, 16%; and sophomore/first-year students, 1%. Instructors also estimated that collectively, 93% of the students enrolled in these courses were majoring in the associated discipline(s) and that almost all of them were using the course to fulfill their baccalaureate-core WI requirement.

This study focused on the undergraduate WI student population. Across all participating WI sections, a total of 256 undergraduates completed the STQ, including 203 seniors, 51 juniors, and 2 first- and second-year students. Corroborating their instructors' estimates, 96% of the undergraduate respondents reported on the STQ that the WI course was in their major, and 87%

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[31] An 8:3 ratio of trained vs. untrained WI faculty is somewhat higher than that which typically holds for the entire pool of active WI faculty.

reported that this was the first WI course they'd taken (and therefore presumably the one they were using to fulfill their baccalaureate-core WI requirement).

Distribution of Study Participants by College

The 21 different WI courses represented in this study constituted 49% of all WI course offerings for the study term. In two cases, two sections of the same course were involved in the study, bringing the total number of participating *sections* to 23 (43% of all scheduled WI sections for the term). Table 3-1 shows the distribution of these sections among the university's eight undergraduate degree-granting colleges.

Table 3-1. Number of participating WI course sections by college.

College	# Participating Sections	Total Start-of-term Undergraduate Enrollment	Total STQ Respondents
Agricultural Sciences (CAS)	2	41	8
Business (COB)	2	50	8
Engineering (COE)	1	29	20
Forestry (COF)	2	49	48
Health and Human Sciences (CHHS)	5	133	87
Liberal Arts (CLA)	7	135	65
Science (COS)	3	76	16
University Honors College (UHC)	1*	5	4
Total	**23**	**518**	**256**

   * The University Honors College course was taught by a CLA faculty member. In the data analysis, results for this class are combined with CLA results.

Two of the participating courses were part of a two-term WI sequence. In one of these courses students were in the first term of the sequence, and in the other they were in the second term. Seven of the courses were taught as combined undergraduate and graduate courses, which explains the graduate student portion of the study population breakdown cited above. (While graduate students were invited to complete the writing questionnaires, this study reports only undergraduate students' responses, this being the cohort to which the university's WI requirement applies.) The largest participating WI section included 61 students (all undergraduates); the smallest section had 6 students (5 undergraduates). Most participating sections, however, fell within the study university's recommended WI-course enrollment range of 15 to 25 students.

As would be expected in WI courses across the disciplines, the writing-related teaching agendas and writing assignments varied considerably among participating courses, both within and across colleges and even for different sections of the same course. As examples of this variation, the formal, documented writing projects assigned in these courses included marketing

plans, artist statements, case study analyses, technical reports, operations manuals, academic essays, journal articles, laboratory reports, research papers, and grant proposals. While most instructors included peer review in their writing curricula, several did not. Some instructors included few or no exploratory, informal writing-to-learn (WTL) activities; others emphasized them. WTL activities assigned by participating faculty included in-class freewrites; written responses to speakers, readings, exhibits, and videos; Web-based discussion logs; lab reports; write-and-pass exercises; resumes; grammatical exercises; pre-lab quizzes to check knowledge of experimental procedures; various types of journals; and a number of other ungraded or low-stakes writing exercises.

Study Process

The first step in the study process was to draft the two student questionnaires on which the study was based (the STQ and its end-of-term follow up). These tools are included as Appendices A and B, and the STQ contents are discussed in Chapter 2. The student questionnaires were developed in fall 2003, pre-tested during the fall term in six OSU WI classes from three colleges, reviewed by several university Writing Center assistants, and refined prior to use in the winter term pilot study.

Carrying out the STQ pilot study involved the following steps, each of which is described more fully below:

- Applying to the university's Internal Review Board for permission to conduct the study, a process that involved preparing and justifying all additional study materials and protocols (as well as the study instruments themselves) and participating in human subjects research training.
- Recruiting faculty participants for the study.
- Arranging for the STQ to be administered in participating classes and then collecting the completed STQs and entering students responses into a database.
- Completing the STQ assessment activities, which involved administering, collecting, and recording responses from the end-of-term student writing self-evaluation and faculty debriefing questionnaires, and conducting follow-up interviews with faculty.

Application for Internal Review Board Research Project Approval

Oregon State University requires Internal Review Board (IRB) approval of *all* faculty- and student-initiated projects involving "human subjects" research—regardless of whether the

projects fully meet the federal criteria for an IRB human-subjects research review waiver, as mine did.[32] To determine whether such approval should be granted for my study, the IRB required the following documentation:

- A detailed description of the research project, including the researcher contacts, project summary, study methodology (including the procedures I would use to obtain and document the required informed consent from all participants and to maintain participant anonymity), and the study's potential risks and benefits to participants.

- Copies of all documents and scripts to be used in the study, including all participant recruitment materials (including telephone scripts, email text, and survey administration scripts), the student and faculty Informed Consent documents, and all of the questionnaires, interview protocols, and debriefing materials I anticipated using in the study.

- Certification that both the researcher and thesis director had completed the required online "Ethical Use of Humans in Research" training, obtained through the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI).[33]

Following an expedited review (possible because the proposed research activities presented "no more than minimal risks to human participants" and would be conducted in an

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[32] That is, the study fell within the parameters specified in the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46.101(b) (1) and (2), and within (b)(2) was not disqualified by (i) or (ii):

45 CFR 46.101 (b) "Unless otherwise required by department or agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

"(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

"(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation."

[33] The OSU Internal Review Board does not allow graduate students to be named as principal investigator on any research project, including their own thesis or dissertation work, instead requiring the thesis director to assume this responsibility. Thus, in research involving human subjects, the director as well as the researcher must undergo the "Ethical Use" training.

"established or commonly accepted educational setting involving normal educational practices," the IRB granted project approval in early December 2003. This gave me just enough time to recruit the instructor participants and provide them with the STQ administration materials prior to their first class meeting of the study term, which began the first week of January 2004.

Instructor Recruitment

In early December 2003, after receiving IRB project approval, I sent out a set of emails addressed to all faculty members in each of Oregon State's undergraduate-degree-granting colleges (Agricultural Sciences, Business, Engineering, Forestry, Health and Human Sciences, Liberal Arts, Science, and the University Honors College) who were slated to teach a WI course during winter term 2004. The emails described the study and invited the addressees' participation in administering the student writing questionnaires in their classrooms. In colleges with only one initial response, I made follow-up contact with non-responding faculty, my goal being to include at least two WI sections per college in the study. With the exception of Engineering and the Honors College, this goal was achieved (Table 3-1).

I had hoped to meet with all participating faculty prior to the start of the study term in order to more fully explain the project to them, clarify their role in it, and reiterate the IRB parameters for questionnaire administration. Because of the short window of time between obtaining IRB approval and the start of winter term (a window whose timing coincided with the university's winter holiday break, when many faculty are out of town), face-to-face meetings were not always possible, so in a number of cases this information was conveyed solely by email. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, this method of distributing information proved to be less than optimal for ensuring instructors' awareness of the full scope of this study and of their role in pilot testing the study instrument.

STQ Administration and Response Collation

Administration Procedures. The primary function of this observational research study was to pilot test the STQ in a variety of WI classrooms in order to learn how students and faculty used the instrument with only minimal guidance from the researcher. Additionally, I wanted to examine the collective set of STQ responses across departments and colleges to see whether these pilot study results might suggest program-level uses for STQ data.

In presenting the STQ to students, however, the tool's pilot-level status had to be de-emphasized so as to avoid biasing their responses through undue focus on their role as the "test

population." Therefore, faculty administering the STQ were asked to represent the questionnaire to their students as being a routine element of their WI classes rather than as a new tool they had never used before, the only difference being that this time, a WI researcher would (with their permission) also be looking at their questionnaires. This meant (as instructors were also requested to tell their students) that per the university's IRB policies as described earlier in this chapter, questionnaire completion was voluntary, students' permission (via signed informed consent forms) was needed in order to use their questionnaires for research, and students' names should not be included on their STQs. Students were free, however, to use an alternative form of survey ID (such as the last four digits of their Social Security number) that would be decodable by the instructor but not by the researcher; and indeed this practice was encouraged to allow STQs to be returned to students later in the term.

I provided participating instructors with a script for STQ administration that conveyed these messages, noting that while a verbatim reading of the script was unnecessary, all of its main points needed to be covered. To extend to instructors maximum control over the amount of class time allotted to STQ use, I also gave them the choice of administering the STQ as either a take-home or in-class activity.

Instructors were requested to administer the STQ during the first week of classes (ideally during the first class meeting), collect and review the completed questionnaires as promptly as possible, and then forward the questionnaires to me for data compilation and analysis.[34]

Collation and Review of STQ Responses. I set up a Microsoft Excel data table for compiling the STQ responses and conducting simple queries, searches, and sorts on the compiled data. Upon receiving the set of returned STQs for a given course section, I manually entered the responses for that section in the data table, saving the data for each section in a separate file. In entering the STQ data, I used several methods for cross-checking for entry errors, including proofreading parts of each entered record against the original form, spot-checking spreadsheet-calculated counts for various database fields, and spot-checking individual data records while recording the compiled class data on the STQ form that I prepared for all instructors who had forwarded me five or more returned questionnaires. As well as creating the individual section reports, I also

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[34] Two of the participating instructors were out of town during the first week of the term. Per their request, I administered the STQ to their sections as an in-class activity and left the returned questionnaires in their mailboxes.

compiled all 23 reports into a single data table in order examine STQ results across courses and colleges.

Classification of Open-ended Student Responses

The STQ included several open-ended, short-answer questions about students' expectations for writing improvement in their WI course (Question 7), their writing strengths and weaknesses (Questions 8 and 9), their characterizations of good writing in their disciplines (Question 13), and their individual writing goals (Question 25). To analyze students' answers to these questions, I divided their responses among 13 categories, starting with the seven categories specified in the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) 2003–04 K–12 Writing Scoring Guide (Appendix C): Ideas and Content, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Citing Sources.

- **Ideas and Content.** STQ responses that referred to rhetorical issues such as audience awareness, idea generation, and persuasive power, and to textual characteristics such as focus, level of detail, and descriptiveness, were placed in this category. I also put references to research performance and (usually) to "creativity" or "imagination" in the Ideas and Content category, as components of idea and content generation.[35] For example, in categorizing students' self-reported writing strengths and weaknesses, responses such as "finding topics to write about," "ability to stay focused," "I get my points across," "good imagination," "I get long-winded," and "good at researching" would all be placed in the Ideas and Content category.
  Note: Although the ODE explicitly includes clarity in the Ideas and Content category, I ended up putting this quality into a separate category along with conciseness, which is not explicitly mentioned in any ODE category. See the explanation later in this section.
- **Organization**. Examples of responses assigned to this category include "organization of ideas," "order of writing," "flow," "transitions," "logical progression of argument," "structure," and so forth. Per the ODE's description of this category, I also designated references to the crafting of introductions and/or conclusions as organization-related

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[35] In some cases, entries of "creative" or "creativity" were paired with "personal characteristic" entries (such as "opinionated" or "persistent"), a situation that makes their across-the-board identification as "ideas and content" items questionable, and in fact I made several judgment calls to categorize these entries as personal characteristic. However, in most cases the pairing indicated that the respondent was thinking specifically about writing qualities as opposed to more general personal traits.

responses, although a strong case could also be made for including this aspect of writing in the Ideas and Content category.

- **Voice.** Because the concept of voice is so variously defined and difficult to pin down, I assigned to this category only student responses that actually contained the word "voice." Many other responses that did not specifically include this term also seemed voice-related, but I classified those as Ideas and Content. For example, "I have a distinctive 'voice' in my writing" qualified as a Voice response, but "not very professional-sounding"—a quality which some may consider voice-based—was categorized as an Ideas and Content response.

- **Word Choice.** Responses such as "I know a lot of strong words," "my vocabulary sucks," "good use of descriptors," and "ought to be more variety of vocab" were assigned to the Word Choice category.

- **Sentence Fluency.** Examples of responses assigned to this category include "sentence length variations," "sentence composition," "sentence structure could use some work," "writing in active voice," and "long sentences." (Note that only responses specifically citing *sentence-level* brevity issues were included in this category; non-sentence-specific items related to textual conciseness were relegated to the Clarity and Conciseness category described below.)

- **Conventions.** Most responses assigned to this category addressed grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation. However, I also assigned document-execution–related responses such as "follow directions with format and layout," "mechanics," and "spacing" to the Conventions category.

- **Citing Sources.** Responses such as "bibliography," "correct use of footnotes," "incorporating cited works," and "citing sources"—that is, responses addressing the inclusion and citation of borrowed information—were assigned to this category. Responses relating to the actual performance of research were assigned to the Ideas and Content category.

I had originally expected the seven ODE Writing Scoring Guide categories to cover most if not all of the writing issues mentioned in students' STQ responses, but in the course of coding student responses, I found that many did *not* fall into those categories and that six additional categories were also needed:

- **Genre.** Responses mentioning a specific writing genre (i.e. "effective scientific writing," "writing in the business setting," "story telling," "experience in writing letters to authorities," etc.) were assigned to this category.

- **Writing Process.** A number of student responses touched on the writing process generally or on specific aspects of the process, such as collaborative work, peer review, getting started, proofreading/revising, and time management. For example, goals such as "develop a stronger writing regime," "not struggle & procrastinate during the beginning stages of rough drafts," "learn how to write group papers so that all members participate & contribute to a great paper," "learn peer review skills," "given a topic be able to just start writing," "start the paper early and get a basic skeleton," and "be able to have a topic that I can write about thoroughly, & not struggle as I write about that topic...starting is my hardest part" were assigned to the Writing Process category.

- **Personal Traits/Experience.** Some students cited personal traits or life experiences in their open-ended responses. Examples of strengths/weaknesses responses assigned to this category include "I draw a lot from things I have read & use those styles as influence," "life experience," "I feel I have a very emotional, poetic writing style," "honest, sincere," "If I have to do something I usually can," "hate doing it," "doubting myself," "non-linear," "laziness," "arrogance," and "lack of confidence."

- **Writing-to-Learn**. A few students cited writing-to-learn issues in their open-ended responses, for example, free-writing skills or desire to increase their repertoire of informal writing skills.

- **General.** Responses too sweeping to qualify for any of the preceding categories were assigned to the General category. For example, in coding student expectations for writing improvement in their WI course, responses such as "overall writing improvement," "all areas," "everything," and "practice makes perfect" were identified as General.

- **Clarity and Conciseness**. For the purposes of this study, the qualities of "conciseness" (at the global as opposed to sentence level) and "clarity" merited their own category.[36] While these two elements are a subset of "Ideas and Content," they arguably are a step removed from other Ideas and Content elements such as audience awareness, quality of ideas, persuasive argument, and level of detail in that they pertain to the enactment, or

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[36] While conciseness is often taught as a sentence-level skill, its successful application requires clear and thorough understanding of the material to be communicated and as such is an important indicator of the writer's grasp of ideas and content.

presentation, of these other elements within a text. For some audiences, clarity and conciseness carry a lot of weight in judgments about the rhetorical effectiveness of texts, while for other audiences, concise and crystal-clear texts are not as important and sometimes are even judged negatively.[37] Workplace audiences by and large fall into the former camp (Paul Anderson 1985, National Commission on Writing 2004, 2005) while, as Beaufort (1999) points out, academic audiences often tend to take the latter position.[38] Because this study works at one of the crossroads of these two "worlds," separating out students' references to these qualities in their STQ responses may be useful.

Clearly, assigning students' responses to one or another of the various writing categories as described above is a subjective process and for vague or cryptically worded responses can amount to guesswork. As the single data reviewer in this pilot study, I tried to address this problem by reviewing and classifying the responses for each open-ended question several times over three or more months to check for consistency in my categorizations of the responses. More ideally, open-ended question responses would be categorized and calibrated by multiple scorers using a more rigorous classification methodology.

STQ Follow-Up with Students and Faculty

Student Follow-up. To learn about students' experience with the STQ, I used an End-of-Term Writing Self-Evaluation (ETQ), included in this report as Appendix B. This questionnaire, similar in format to the STQ, was intended for use by all students in the pilot study classrooms—both those who had and had *not* completed the STQ [39]; and in fact, the latter group's responses served

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[37] To illustrate this point, McLeod and Maimon (2000) explain that in WI faculty workshops, "one of us likes to start the discussion about learning to write in a discipline by passing out a one-page student paper and asking participants to grade it, giving them no other instructions. The science faculty invariably score it high, because it is 'concise'; the humanities faculty score it low for 'lack of development' (580).

[38] Interestingly, the quality of "conciseness" does not appear in any of the 2003–04 State of Oregon Writing Scoring Guide categories on which K–12 student writing is evaluated. Also, at the time the study was conducted, few of the sample rubrics included in the study university's WI training materials mentioned conciseness.

[39] The ETQ was constructed as a tool for eliciting feedback on students' experience with the STQ—information that would be useful not only to the researcher but also to the students themselves, their instructors, and possibly their departments and the WI program director. However, the ETQ also served as a "stand alone" pedagogical tool. I expected that the process of completing this questionnaire would help all students—STQ takers and non-takers alike—to crystallize their experience in the course by prompting them to reflect on areas of skills and

as comparator data in assessing STQ impact on those who used the tool. Chapter 4 discusses the results of this STQ follow-up.

As with the STQ, the purposes and potential benefits of the pilot study ETQ were articulated in that questionnaire's introductory text, shown in Figure 3-1.

THIS WRITING SELF-EVALUATION HAS TWO PURPOSES:

(1) **It gives you a chance to <u>assess and reflect on your progress in this WIC</u> course in the areas of writing, subject-matter learning, and career preparation.**

Taking the time to reflect on your learning experiences can be extremely effective both for consolidating the knowledge you have gained and for identifying factors that have enhanced and/or interfered with your learning process.

(2) **It's an opportunity to <u>provide valuable course-related feedback</u> to your instructor and offer suggestions for future course improvements.**

This self-evaluation is anonymous; and as with the standard OSU course evaluation that you'll also complete, the results will not be available to your instructor until after course grades have been submitted. Please answer all questions candidly.

Figure 3-1. ETQ Introduction.

Following a brief set of demographic questions for all respondents, the first section of the pilot study ETQ specifically addressed students who had completed the STQ, asking them about their uses of the STQ both at the point of actual completion and subsequently during the course. The second and third sections, addressed to STQ-takers and non-takers alike, focused respectively on students' writing skills development during the WI course and on the extent to which the course writing activities had contributed to their subject-matter learning. My model for this dual line of questioning was Beeson and Darrow's 1997 survey research on students' experiences with both of these aspects of WI courses. Several ETQ questions were also adapted from Bosley's (2003) "Survey of Writing Intensive Courses: Students." Following up on the goal-setting aspect of the STQ, the second and third sections also addressed the degree to which students felt they had accomplished writing- and content-related goals for the course—both any outcomes specified on the course syllabus (if respondents could recall these) and any goals respondents had set for themselves (again, if they could recall these). In directing these goal-related questions to all respondents rather than including them in the first section (which was targeted exclusively to

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knowledge development that might otherwise go unnoted. As such, ETQ completion constituted a potentially valuable learning experience in itself.

students who had completed the STQ), I hoped to discover whether students who had *not* completed the STQ also set personal learning goals for the course.

Confidence has been identified as an important element in skills and knowledge development.[40] Thus, I also included questions about the degree to which the course had enhanced ETQ respondents' confidence in themselves as writers, thinkers, subject-matter learners, and future professionals. Finally, because of the career focus both on the STQ and in the study university's WI charter, students were asked to assess the degree to which, in their judgment, this course had helped expand their repertoire of career-relevant writing skills. While I did not expect to use all of these data in my assessment of STQ impact, I expected that instructors would value student feedback in all of these areas.

I delivered the ETQs to instructors during week 8 of the 10-week study term, after sending out a set-up email the preceding week. I did not provide an explicit script for ETQ administration, but the set-up email reviewed the questionnaire's purpose and the administration parameters, and I included a reminder memo in the ETQ packets sent to each instructor.

Faculty were free to choose the class session in which the ETQ would be administered but were requested to follow the standard OSU procedure for end-of-term course evaluations, in which the instructor leaves the classroom while students complete the questionnaire; students put their completed questionnaires in a collection envelope; and a designated student delivers the envelope to the department office. I then retrieved these ETQ packets from the respective department offices for response compilation.

I entered the ETQ results for each study section in a separate Excel data table and then compiled the data for all sections in a single data table, as described above for STQ data compilation. As with the STQ, I also recorded the collective data for each section on a blank ETQ form and forwarded these forms to instructors after the grade due date for the study term.

Some readers may question the use of survey-format self-evaluations for student STQ follow-up. My choice of this format is supported by Beeson and Darrow's 1997 review of the literature on end-of-term student self-assessment of learning, which includes the following finding:

> In reviewing dozens of studies that investigate end-of-course evaluation forms completed by students, Cashin (1988) and Braskamp and Ory (1994) conclude

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[40] Among other researchers, Hilgers, Hussey, and Stitt-Bergh (1999) and Silva, Cary, and Thaiss (1999) discuss this phenomenon specifically as related to writing skills development in WI courses.

that such surveys provide sufficiently reliable, valid, and trustworthy measures. For instance, [student] surveys [of teaching effectiveness] often correlate well with other measures, such as ratings by colleagues, instructor self-evaluations, and student-achievement tests" (100).

Instructor Follow-up. To find out about how participating instructors used the STQ and what they thought about it, I put together a set of "Instructor Debriefing Questions," included in this report as Appendix D. This faculty questionnaire sought the following information:

- Demographics and characteristic learning styles of the students in their WI section(s)
- The procedures participating instructors used for administering and collecting the STQs
- Their understanding of the tool's purpose and intentions for its use
- How strongly participating instructors verbally endorsed STQ completion when presenting the tool to their students
- What participating instructors learned from reviewing the STQ responses and how that information influenced their teaching
- Their follow-up uses of the STQ during the term
- The likelihood of their using the STQ again in future WI classes.

For faculty who wanted to continue using the STQ in future WI classes, the debriefing questionnaire asked what they might do differently next time, in terms of both the questionnaire administration process and the types of uses to which they might put the STQ during the term. I also asked these faculty respondents to reflect specifically on (1) ways they might make the goal-setting component a more integral part of their writing curriculum and (2) potential departmental uses of the STQ, for example, as a tool for obtaining student input in the development of department or program writing outcomes and as a vehicle for communicating to students any existing department writing outcomes.

I distributed the STQ debriefing questionnaire to participating faculty at the same time that I returned their compiled class ETQ data. A cover memo asked faculty to complete the questionnaire prior to a face-to-face debriefing interview to be scheduled after the study term ended. Those interviews, which comprised 30- to 60-minute conversations that were unrecorded but in which I took notes, took place during the first half of spring term 2004. At the time of the scheduled interview, any faculty member who had not yet completed the questionnaire was given the option of doing so as we talked or completing it afterwards and returning it via campus mail. As with the student questionnaire data, I used a Microsoft Excel data table to compile and work

with the instructor questionnaire responses, information that was augmented by my interview notes.

All information sought from participants in this pilot study was obtained and compiled by mid-June 2004, at which point I began the process of examining, interpreting, and reporting on these data as described in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4:
STUDENT EXPERIENCE

> The practice of self-assessment teaches learners how to stop and think about how they are thinking and doing things now. It encourages reflection about how things were done in the past. It highlights thinking patterns—both their genius and their limitations. (Fenwick and Parsons 2000, p. 110)

Introduction

This chapter addresses the first research focus of this study—an inquiry into students' experience with the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire (STQ), included in this report as Appendix A. As discussed in Chapter 1, a primary objective of this pilot study was to observe how upper-division college students enrolled in a variety of writing-intensive (WI) classes at the study university experienced a survey-format, self-reflective writing-skills assessment and goal-setting questionnaire administered at the start of their WI course. For example, did the students enrolled in these classes tend to use this tool voluntarily? For those who did complete the STQ, did they find the experience helpful in any way? And—judging primarily by self-assessment—were there any indications that STQ completion might have positively affected these students' subsequent WI course experience?

In the following pages, I step through a series of questions that get at these issues. The answers to these questions emerged through an examination of various study data, including STQ return rates, student responses to selected STQ questions, instructor feedback, and feedback obtained through the End-of-Term Writing Self Evaluation (ETQ) completed by students in participating classrooms (see Appendix B). In the Discussion section of this chapter, I offer some tentative interpretations—subject to the limitations of this study—of the results reported here and the potential for STQ impact on student engagement and learning in WI classrooms.

A caveat for readers of this report: This pilot study generated a good deal of quantitative data, some of which are presented and discussed in the following pages, others of which are presented in Chapter 6. Readers should keep in mind that as an observational inquiry, this study was not intended—and nor should it be used—as a means of showing definitive causal relationships between STQ use and an enhanced WI course experience for all students. Formal tests of the data's significance are most likely inappropriate due to the nature of the study and methods of data collection. The study examined information generated by a single, non-replicable student sample from one university, and while these data may serve as a starting place for more

comprehensive research efforts, readers should not assume that the results reported here will necessarily hold for different student populations either within or beyond the study university. Trends observed in this study can only be statistically confirmed through additional research done in more tightly controlled settings.

Results of Student-Experience Research

STQ Completion Rates

> **Q:** In and of itself, did the Start-of-Term-Questionnaire have enough appeal to most incoming WI students in the pilot study group that they independently chose to complete it?
>
> **A:** Judging by the return rate patterns associated with different STQ administration conditions, relatively few students opted to take the survey completely of their own volition. For the majority of STQ Takers, external pressure likely played some part in their decision to complete this exercise.

While more than half (53%) of the students within participating WI sections did complete and return their STQ, the vast majority of this group were in sections whose instructors presented the questionnaire as a routine, in-class exercise in which all students were expected to participate. In sections where STQ completion was presented as an optional, out-of-class exercise, a much smaller percentage of students participated. [41]

- In the twelve sections whose instructors administered the STQ as an in-class exercise, the return rate was 222 out of 273 students, or 81%. And although all instructors involved in this study were requested to explain to their students that STQ completion was optional, the three faculty who chose not to do so—instead presenting the task as a routine in-class activity in which they expected all of their students to participate—had the highest return rates of all: 92–100%. [42]

- Among the eleven sections in which the STQ was administered as a take-home exercise—and hence whose students likely had a greater sense of true choice about doing

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[41] Information on how instructors administered the survey was obtained from the instructor STQ debriefing questionnaire described in Chapter 3 and included as Appendix D.

[42] Return rates for individual "in class" sections ranged from 58% to 100%.

or not doing it (as well as greater likelihood of losing track of it)—only 49 of a possible 261 students, or 19%, completed and returned their STQ.[43]

In contrast to the in-class versus take-home completion factor in determining STQ return rates, instructors' verbal endorsement of the value of STQ completion appears to have exerted less influence on students' decision to fill out and return this questionnaire.

- Among sections with the highest (>80%) STQ return rates, instructors were almost evenly split among those who reported that in presenting the survey to their students they had (1) strongly emphasized their personal interest in students' responses and/or the survey's function as a learning enhancement tool; (2) mentioned but did not emphasize their personal interest and/or the learning enhancement function; and (3) verbalized neither of these things to their students. In other words, the commonality among the high-return-rate classes in this pilot study was in-class survey administration, not the extent to which instructors verbally endorsed the task.

- The same reported variability in instructors' verbalizations to their students about STQ benefits (options 1–3 above) existed among sections with a <20% STQ return rate. The only identifiable shared characteristic among all of these low-return-rate sections was that their instructors administered the STQ as an exercise to be completed outside of class.

Seriousness of Student Effort in STQ Completion

Q: Did students who completed the STQ take the effort seriously?

A: Almost all students who reported completing the STQ also reported having taken the task "somewhat" or "very" seriously.

In participating WI sections, student feedback on their WI experience, including the STQ if they completed it, was obtained via an End-of-Term Writing Self-Evaluation (ETQ), which is included in this report as Appendix B. In conformance with the study university's protocol for standard end-of-term course evaluations, students completed the ETQ anonymously and their questionnaires were reviewed by the researcher and their instructor only after course grades had been turned in. In the ETQ, respondents who had also completed the STQ (hereafter called "STQ Takers") were asked how seriously they had taken the effort of completing the questionnaire. Of

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[43] Return rates for individual "take-home" sections ranged from 8% to 58%.

the 198 undergraduate ETQ respondents who identified themselves as STQ Takers,[44] 20% reported having taken the task "very seriously," 71% "somewhat seriously," 8% "not very seriously," and 1% "not at all seriously."

A review of the 256 returned STQ forms seems to substantiate students' claims in their ETQs about having taken the STQ completion effort seriously. Almost all STQ respondents filled out the questionnaire completely, not only answering all of the multiple-choice questions but also providing full and on-task responses to the open-ended questions that presumably required greater investment of time and thought. Also, less than 1% of the returned STQs contained negative comments about the STQ in the questionnaire's closing question (26), included as a "venting" opportunity for respondents.

Furthermore, assuming respondents worked through the STQ consecutively, a comparison of responses to two key STQ questions—the lead-in question about respondents' expectations for writing improvement during their WI course (Question 7[45]) and the penultimate question that asked students to articulate two personal writing goals for the course (Question 25[46])—provides some interesting anecdotal evidence to suggest that students not only tended to stay on task from start to finish but also that their engagement with the STQ may actually have increased during the process of completing the questionnaire.

For example, of the 21% of STQ respondents who initially expressed skepticism (in Question 7) that their WI experience would help them develop as writers, most nonetheless worked through the remainder of the questionnaire and ended up generating personal writing

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[44] This number equates to about 80% of the number of STQs that were completed and turned in (a total of 256).

[45] Question 7 asked students to select Yes, No, or Don't Know to indicate whether they expected their writing to improve as a result of taking the WI course. Students who selected Yes or No were also asked to explain their choice. Of the 256 STQ respondents, 201 (79%) selected Yes, and 187 added a supporting explanation. Twenty-one students (8%) selected No, with 16 explaining why. The remaining 34 respondents (13%) selected the Don't Know option.

[46] Question 25 began by asking respondents to reflect on the kind of writing they expect to do, and the kind of writer they want to be, in their first job after graduation, and to consider any gaps between that picture and their current level of writing skill. Students were then urged to keep those gaps in mind as they formulated two personal writing goals that they would want to achieve in their WI course—goals that mattered in their specific situation, that need not coincide with the course writing outcomes identified by their instructor, and that they would assume primary responsibility for achieving. Of the 256 STQ respondents, 232 formulated both of the requested goals and another 6 formulated one such goal, yielding a 93% response rate to this question. Only 18 students (7% of the total respondent group) skipped the goal-setting question entirely.

goals for their WI course in Question 25,[47] suggesting both a willingness to approach the course more proactively than their Question 7 responses might indicate and also a bolstering of respondents' internal locus of control[48] as a result of working through the STQ.

Also, as shown in Table 4-1, respondents' goals statements in Question 25—presumably constructed at the end of a reflective process in which they had considered their strengths and weaknesses as writers, their expectations for writing in their intended career, and their experience with various writing activities—were both more explicit (as evidenced by the smaller percentage of "General" items) and differently distributed across 13 writing categories than their initial expectations statements. Also, the 187 explanations generated in Question 7 as to how students expected to improve as writers in their WI course averaged 4.9 words each, whereas the 470 goals statements generated by students in Question 25 averaged 8.1 words each. Perhaps this difference

Table 4-1. Distribution of responses for Questions 7 and 25 across writing categories.

	Distribution of Response Items across Thirteen Writing Categories*	
Writing Category	**Question 7—Expected Areas of Writing Improvement (n=232)[†]**	**Question 25—Personal Writing Goal Areas (n=509)[‡]**
General	17%	8%
Citing Sources	–	2%
Clarity and Conciseness	10%	11%
Conventions	5%	9%
Genre	17%	12%
Ideas and Content	20%	19%
Organization	16%	12%
Personal Traits	1%	3%
Sentence Fluency	2%	2%
Voice	–	1%
Word Choice	3%	4%
Writing Process	8%	16%
Writing-to-Learn	–	2%

* These categories are described in Chapter 3.

[†] Of the 187 students who described their anticipated writing improvements in their WI course, 45 cited improvements in more than one writing area, resulting in a total of 232 improvement items.

[‡] Of the 470 goals statements generated in Question 25, 39 addressed more than one writing area, resulting in a total of 509 goal items.

[47] Of the 21 students who indicated in Question 7 that they did not expect to develop as writers in this course, 19 nonetheless completed the Question 25 goal-setting exercise, collectively generating 34 writing-specific goals. Likewise, 25 of the 34 students who selected the "Don't Know" option for Question 7 responded to Question 25, collectively generating 50 writing-specific course goals.

[48] That is, of respondents' "belief that control can be exerted on various life events, and that individual's initiatives can affect unfavorable circumstances" (Neumann, Finaly, and Reichel 1988, p. 555).

is simply a function of the relative amounts of answer space provided for these questions or of the nature of the questions themselves. But in any case, most respondents clearly spent more writing time on Question 25 than they had on Question 7. (Readers interested in seeing a sampling of student responses to a progressive series of open-ended STQ questions can consult Appendix E.)

Students' View of STQ Functions and Benefits

> **Q:** What did STQ Takers view as the STQ's principal functions and benefits?
>
> **A**: As indicated by their End-of-Term Writing Self-Evaluation (ETQ) responses, STQ Takers saw the tool as having multiple functions and benefits. Primarily, though, students viewed the STQ as an attention-directing device that helped them focus on the writing component of their WI course. STQ Takers who reviewed their start-of-term questionnaires at the end of the term, prior to completing the ETQ, collectively reported greater use of the STQ's writing-related functions than STQ Takers who did *not* review their start-of-term questionnaires prior to filling out the ETQ.

Collective STQ Taker Group Responses. The End-of-Term Writing Self-Evaluation (ETQ) listed five potential STQ functions and asked STQ Takers to identify which of these functions they associated with tool use, with the following results:

- 60% saw the STQ as a "tool for thinking about my writing skills."
- 59% saw the STQ as an "information source for WI researcher."
- 48% saw the STQ as an "information source for my instructor."
- 42% saw the STQ as a "goal-setting tool for writing skills improvement."
- 17% saw the STQ as a "prompt for class discussions about writing issues."

Next, the ETQ listed nine aspects of the WI course experience (not all specifically writing-related) and asked STQ Takers to identify any that for them had been enhanced through STQ completion. Percentages of STQ Takers who felt the tool had enhanced each aspect are as follows:

- "Awareness of my writing strengths and weaknesses"—55%
- "Understanding of WI course requirements"—52%
- "Motivation to improve my writing skills"—43%

- ▪ "Perception of my instructor as an ally in accomplishing course outcomes and goals"—
  37%
- ▪ "Awareness of the connection between my efforts in this WI class and my future career
  success"—34%
- ▪ "Engagement with the writing assignments in the course"—34%
- ▪ "Success in completing the course writing assignments"—31%
- ▪ "Overall success in the WI class"—26%
- ▪ "Success in learning the subject matter in this course"— 21%

These data suggest that students who completed the STQ associated the personal benefits of tool use primarily with writing-skill assessment and less strongly with subject-matter learning or their overall course experience.

Comparison of Responses for STQ Reviewers And Non-Reviewers. As noted in Chapter 3, instructor participants in this study were encouraged to invite their students to include an alias ID on their STQs, as a way to preserve respondent anonymity for the researcher while still allowing the questionnaires to be returned to students at the end of the term for reference and review prior to ETQ completion. About 50 students who completed the STQ did include an alias, and their forms were returned to them at the end of the term. Thirty-three ETQ respondents reported that they had reviewed their STQ prior to ETQ completion.[49] In examining STQ Takers' ETQ responses, it is interesting to note that these 33 student (hereafter identified as the "STQ Reviewer" group) more often ascribed writing-related benefits to STQ use than did the 165 STQ Takers who did *not* review their STQ prior to completing the ETQ (the "STQ Non-reviewer" group). See Table 4-2.

In light of the sometimes substantial differences in the opinions of STQ Takers who *did* and *did not* review their STQ prior to completing the ETQ regarding STQ benefits, I continued to investigate differences between these subgroups as well as between the collective group of STQ Takers compared to STQ Non-takers. Some of these differences are reported in subsequent sections of this chapter.

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[49] Students in eight sections (across five colleges) reported having reviewed the STQ prior to completing the ETQ. Most (23) of these respondents were from the two classes whose instructors explicitly directed this review activity. Four of the 33 STQ Reviewers were from sections where students completed the STQ outside of class; the remainder were from sections where students completed the STQ in class.

Table 4-2. Percentages of respondents in the two STQ Taker subgroups who agreed that the STQ had served stated function: STQ Takers who did <u>not</u> review their STQ prior to completing ETQ ("STQ Non-reviewers") and (2) STQ Takers who <u>did</u> review their STQ prior to ETQ completion ("STQ Reviewers").

Start-Of-Term Writing Questionnaire (STQ) Function	Percentages of Subgroups Agreeing STQ Served Specified Functions	
	STQ Non-reviewers (n=165)	STQ Reviewers (n= 33)
Tool for thinking about respondent's writing skills	57%	70%
Goal-setting tool for writing skills improvement	38%	61%
Increased awareness of respondent's writing strengths and weaknesses	53%	64%
Increased respondent motivation to improve writing skills	42%	48%
Increased respondent engagement with course writing assignments	33%	36%
Enhanced respondent success in completing course writing assignments	29%	41%

Associations Between STQ Completion and Subsequent WI Course Experience

Q: Does a comparison of STQ Taker and STQ Non-taker end-of-term writing self-evaluation responses indicate any possible association between STQ completion and an enhanced WI course experience for students?

A: Completing the STQ may be associated with improved student self-perception of writing-related WI course experiences, as reflected by an across-the-board comparison of ETQ responses for STQ Takers and STQ Non-takers. More notable differences in writing-related self-assessments, however, show up in a comparison of responses for the subset of STQ Takers who reviewed their STQ prior to completing the ETQ versus all other ETQ respondents.

Response Data Used for Comparisons. In designing the STQ, my goal was to create a tool that would help boost students out of a "middle of the road" stance toward their WI course and into more instrumental engagement with the course, which might in turn effect a more positive course experience (for both students and instructor). Thus, to look for associations between STQ completion and enhanced course experience, I compared the percentages of STQ Takers and STQ Non-takers who *"strongly agreed"* (as opposed to "somewhat agreed," "somewhat disagreed," or

"strongly disagreed") with various ETQ statements describing writing-related investments and accomplishments in their WI course.

Assessments of Effort and General Writing Improvement. The ETQ contained a number of statements that addressed students' sense of writing-related efforts, improvements, and gains during their WI course. Portions of each respondent group in strong agreement with these statements are compared in Table 4-3.[50]

- As the first two data columns of Table 4-3 show, the "strongly agree" percentages for the STQ Taker group taken as a whole ("All STQ Takers") were all slightly higher than those for the STQ Non-taker group.

- More noticeable differences emerge when the results for STQ Takers who had the opportunity to review their STQ prior to completing the ETQ ("STQ Reviewer" subgroup) are examined separately from those for STQ Takers who did *not* review their STQ ("STQ Non-reviewer" subgroup). In Table 4-3, data columns 3 and 4 show this breakout.

- In fact, in the *absence* of end-of-term STQ review, associations between enhanced course experience and STQ completion, as indicated by data comparisons between the STQ Non-taker and STQ Non-reviewer responses (data columns 1 and 3 in Table 4-3), all but disappear.

As noted previously, the STQ Reviewer group is much smaller than either of the other two groups, represents fewer courses and colleges, and may be subject to other confounding selection factors that contribute to the ETQ response differences shown here. Nonetheless, the numbers do suggest that even a one-time review of the STQ at the end of the term may have helped students in this pilot study recall their "starting status" in their WI course and may be associated with more positive student self-evaluations of their progress as writers and learners during the course.

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[50] I limited the data comparisons to statements that were rated by students in all participating study sections. Questions about students' experience with peer review and writing-to-learn were also included in the ETQ, but some respondents indicated that their courses had not included these activities. Thus, I do not report results for those questions here. See Chapter 6 for discussions of student-generated data related to these activities.

Table 4-3. Percentages of STQ Non-taker, STQ Taker (total), STQ Non-reviewer, and STQ Reviewer groups who strongly agreed with key statements on the ETQ.

ETQ Statement About Student Experience	Percentage of Group Members Who "Strongly Agreed" with ETQ Statement			
	STQ Non-takers (n=168)	All STQ Takers (n=198)	STQ Non-reviewers (n=165)	STQ Reviewers (n=33)
I have put a great deal of effort toward *improving my writing skills* in this WI class.	22%	24%	20%	42%
My *discipline-related writing skills* have improved as a result of completing the writing assignments in this course.	23%	28%	27%	33%
During this course, my *revising skills* have improved.	21%	28%	25%	45%
My repertoire of discipline- and/or career-related writing skills has expanded by taking this class.	29%	30%	27%	48%
As a result of taking this course, I have more confidence in myself as a writer.	21%	25%	23%	33%
As a result of taking this course, I have more confidence in myself as a future professional in my intended career field.	29%	30%	27%	45%

The ETQ also asked students to rate their discipline-related writing skill levels at the beginning and end of their WI course, using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 4-4 compares the results of this question for students in the three respondent groups (STQ Non-takers, STQ Non-reviewers, and STQ Reviewers). These results show that at both the beginning and end of the term, STQ Non-takers rated their writing skills lowest and STQ Reviewers rated their writing skills highest. Conversely, however, in terms of the amount of self-assessed writing improvement (calculated as the difference between the groups' end-of-term and start-of-term ratings), the STQ Non-takers rated themselves highest and the STQ Reviewers rated themselves lowest.

Table 4-4. Average rating of beginning and ending writing skills for the three ETQ respondent groups.

Average rating of writing skills (1 = low; 5 = high)	Respondent Group		
	STQ Non-takers (n=168)	STQ Non-reviewers (n=165)	STQ Reviewers (n=33)
Beginning of course	3.17	3.23	3.41
End of course	3.68	3.72	3.80
Difference between end and beginning ratings	+0.51	+0.49	+0.39

Assessment of Writing Goals Accomplishment. The ETQ asked student respondents to rate their progress on (a) writing-related outcomes/objectives listed on their WI course syllabi and (b) writing-related goals they had set for themselves. Table 4-5 compares percentages of "strongly agree" ratings on these goals-progress statements for the STQ Non-taker, STQ Non-reviewer, and STQ Reviewer groups. In addition, Table 4-5 shows the portion of each group that selected the "Don't recall or none specified" responses to these statements.

Table 4-5. Students' responses to writing-goal-related statements for the three respondent groups.

ETQ Writing-Goal-Progress Statements	"Strongly Agree" Ratings			"Don't Recall or None Specified" Ratings		
	STQ-Non takers (n=168)	STQ-Non reviewers (n=165)	STQ Reviewer (n=33)	STQ-Non takers (n=168)	STQ-Non reviewers (n=165	STQ Reviewers (n=33)
"I have made significant progress towards meeting one or more of the writing-related course outcomes/objectives listed on the course syllabus"	35%	23%	49%	20%	16%	9%
"I have made significant progress toward meeting one or more writing goals that I set for myself at the beginning of this course"	19%	14%	42%	43%	22%	12%

Discussion

Limitations of this Study for Data Analysis

As noted in the chapter introduction, this study was observational in nature: the primary goal was to discover both whether and how a start-of-term student writing questionnaire developed for optional use in WI classrooms would be used by both instructors and students in a variety of WI courses at the study university. Differences among participating WI sections in the way the STQ was administered, in the level and manner of subsequent STQ use (by both instructors and students) during the term and in various other classroom conditions, preclude characterizing the various student subgroups compared in this chapter as "statistically representative samples." Thus, the pilot study results presented in this chapter cannot in

themselves serve as a basis for overarching, generalized claims about the impact of the STQ on the student experience in WI courses; to make such claims, these results would need to be corroborated in more controlled study conditions. Still, pilot study results do suggest potential positive effects of STQ use, and I hope this fact will provide incentive for further experimentation with the tool in WI classrooms.

Return Rate Patterns and Implications

The discrepancy in return rates for sections where the STQ was administered as a take-home activity (8–58%, average 19%) as compared with those for sections in which the STQ was administered as an in-class activity (58–100%, average 81%) suggests that "captive audience" conditions rather than a view of the STQ as a personally advantageous learning tool may be a strong motivation factor in many WI students' choice to complete this questionnaire. Given that no other consistent differences were identified during study follow-up in the way instructors in high- and low-return-rate sections presented the STQ to their students, it seems likely that the lower return rate associated with home completion was related to the greater freedom of choice to complete or not complete the STQ afforded by that scenario, as well, perhaps, as the greater likelihood of losing track of the questionnaire in a take-home situation. What also seems likely, and to some extent is supported by the data,[51] is that the individuals who did complete their STQ as an optional take-home exercise were collectively more highly motivated and engaged (with regard to writing-skills development) to begin with than were the sections of in-class STQ Takers, which would have included not only similarly highly motivated students but also students who in a take-home situation may not have chosen to complete the STQ.

Thus, assuming that instructors are committed to reaching the less-motivated students in their classrooms, the recommended practice for future STQ administration would be to present

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[51] For example, the percentage of the take-home group that reported having taken the task of filling out the STQ "very seriously" was almost twice as high as the percentage for the in-class completion group—33% v. 18%—and the take-home completers also used the STQ more extensively for self-reflection and goal-setting than the in-class completers (67% v. 58% used the STQ as a "tool for thinking about my writing skills" and 55% v. 39% used it as a goal-setting tool). And while the take-home completers as a group claimed not to have put substantially greater effort into improving their writing skills during the course than the in-class completers (27% v. 23% in each group "strongly agreed" with this claim), they *did* report substantially greater improvement in their discipline-related writing skills (39% v. 25%) and revising skills (42% v. 25%), raising the possibility that this self-selected group was collectively more inclined to focus on writing issues than the larger, more "captive" audience of STQ takers who completed the questionnaire in class.

the questionnaire as either an in-class exercise or a required take-home assignment for which students will receive credit. (Most participating instructors, incidentally, independently stated their preference, in future use of the STQ, to administer it both in-class *and* for-credit. See Chapter 5.) Having students include their name on the questionnaire not only will increase student accountability for STQ completion but may also enhance the value of the information for WI instructors by linking individual STQ responses with the students who supplied them. For example, an instructor who sees a comment such as "I am very afraid of WIC courses, and peer review, I do not have confidence in my writing skills" on an STQ might wish to address those fears with the student who made the comment. (On the other hand, the possibility that some students might feel hesitant to provide this kind of feedback in a non-anonymous situation should also be taken into consideration in STQ administration; such a possibility might be addressed through the use of aliases as described earlier in this chapter.)

Having respondents include their name (or other ID) on their STQ would also enable instructors to return the questionnaires to students for review later in the term—potentially an important aspect of STQ use, as discussed below.

In addition to the changes in administration procedures discussed above, other modifications to the pilot study approaches may also improve STQ return rates.

- First, a stronger and more comprehensive explanation of the STQ's purpose and benefits than appears to have been provided by most WI instructors who participated in this pilot study[52] might improve not only students' STQ completion and return rates but also the quality of their efforts in responding. Such a change in practice likely would require formal faculty training in the use of this tool, a possibility further discussed in Chapter 5.

- It is also important to consider what part the questionnaire itself might have played in low return rates associated with take-home completion. The questionnaire's length, for example, may have been off-putting. A few students who completed the survey made that observation, as did some of the participating faculty. (On the other hand, some faculty also felt strongly that the STQ should *not* be shortened. See Chapter 5.) The STQ form was neither fancy nor colorful (it was printed on white bond), and this may also have

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[52] While in both the email invitation to participate in the study and in the presentation materials I provided in instructors' STQ packets (see Chapter 3) I described the tool's teaching and learning functions, a number of instructors reported during the post-study follow-up interviews that they had completely missed my communications about the potential for integrating it into their writing curriculum and instead had seen it strictly as a research tool.

facilitated its being "lost in the shuffle." For future use of the STQ, creating a more
compelling graphic design for the questionnaire and printing it on heavier stock and in a
brochure layout that students could insert into their notebooks might help improve both
return and retention rates. Both of these suggestions were forwarded by participating
faculty, as were the ideas of presenting the STQ as an online tool and of changing the
tool's name to focus on its personal goal-setting function, which might more effectively
capture students' attention, imagination, and interest in using the tool.

Perceived STQ Benefits and Uses

Turning now to the pool of students who did complete the STQ in this pilot study, several
indicators suggest that most of these students not only were able to see the advantages of
completing a start-of-term, self-reflective exercise but also engaged the exercise fully enough to
experience those advantages. The absence of negative responses to the closing question on the
STQ—a "venting opportunity" that invited student comments about both the WI requirement and
the STQ[53]—indicates that while some of the STQ Takers may have felt pressured into completing
the exercise, they nonetheless approached the task with reasonably good will. This conclusion is
supported by the fact that on the ETQ, 91% of the 195 respondents who indicated they had
completed the STQ reported having taken STQ completion "somewhat" to "very" seriously, and
87% of the STQ Takers identified at least one way (but more commonly, multiple ways) in which
the experience of completing the STQ had benefited themselves and/or their instructor.[54] Between
40% and 60% of the STQ Takers (depending on the specified STQ function) reported they had
used the questionnaire as a tool for evaluating their current writing skills, setting writing-related
course goals, clarifying the purpose of a WI course, and better informing their instructor about

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[53] STQ Question 26 solicited comments on "WIC courses in general, this course
specifically, and/or this questionnaire," thus allowing respondents to air any negative feelings
they might harbor about the STQ or anything else related to the WI requirement or their
forthcoming WI experience. Of 256 undergraduate STQ respondents, only 19 took this
opportunity to comment, and only five of these comments addressed the questionnaire itself (the
other 14 addressed WI courses in general). Only two of the five comments were negative, e.g.
"The questions were rather long & overly wordy making them difficult to answer" and "Too
long."

[54] Twenty-five of 198 STQ Taker respondents responded either "No" or "Not sure" to all
possible STQ benefits listed in ETQ questions 6-8. Eight STQ Taker respondents viewed
questionnaire purely as a third-party research tool. All other STQ Taker respondents identified at
least one personal and/or instructor benefit of completing the STQ, in most cases noting multiple
such benefits.

their writing experience and their writing-related expectations and needs for the course. With a fuller explanation of the STQ, its potential benefits, and planned follow-up activities provided to students by the instructor at the time of STQ administration, these percentages might well improve, a possibility that could certainly be tested with future STQ use.

Writing-Related Course Experience Comparisons for STQ Takers and STQ Non-takers

In addition to the direct questioning on the ETQ about STQ Takers' experience with the STQ (discussed above), comparisons of responses to ETQ questions for STQ Taker and STQ Non-taker groups shows that for the pilot study population, some association may exist between STQ completion and quality of students' subsequent WI course experience, as reported by students at the end of their course. As Table 4-3 shows, however, substantial differences between the end-of-term self-assessments of STQ Takers and STQ Non-takers show up only for the subgroup of STQ Takers who reviewed their start-of-term questionnaires before completing the ETQ. Presumably, this is at least partly due to these students' having a concrete basis for assessing their course progress, but other contributing factors may also exist (including confounding factors in subgroup selection). A more statistically rigorous research design would be helpful in sorting these factors out.

Writing Goals Accomplishment

As shown in Table 4-5, the highest ratings for personal writing goals accomplishment (as reported on students' end-of-the term writing self-evaluations) are linked in this study with students who (a) explicitly set personal writing goals at the beginning of the term and (b) reviewed those goals at the end of the term. Conversely, the collectively lowest ratings for personal writing goals accomplishment came from students who (a) recalled having explicitly set personal writing goals at the beginning of the term but (b) never revisited those goals and therefore may have had only vague (if any) recollection of what those goals had been. Neither of these results is particularly surprising. One of the more intriguing results of this pilot study, however, is the stronger sense expressed by the STQ Reviewer group, as compared to both the STQ Non-reviewer and STQ Non-taker groups, of having achieved the *instructor-specified* course writing goals. Confirming this association, and than investigating the reasons for it, might be a worthwhile topic for further research.

Another unexpected and intriguing result of this pilot study is that in response to the ETQ inquiry about students' progress toward the personal writing goals they had set at the beginning

of the term, less than a quarter of the respondents who had *not* completed the STQ—and therefore had not participated in an explicit goal-setting exercise—chose the "I set no writing goals" option. The fact that three-quarters of this group chose one of the goals-progress ratings (i.e., they selected one of the options that expressed agreement or disagreement with the statement that "I have made significant progress toward meeting one or more writing goals that I set for myself at the beginning of this course" or else the option stating that they forgot what their goals were) suggests that many students may set writing goals for themselves event without being explicitly directed to do so.[55] Were this phenomenon to be confirmed through further research, the STQ could be viewed as a leveraging tool that brings students' preexisting writing goals into sharper focus.

In retrospect, it would have been useful to ask ETQ respondents to actually list the writing goals they had set for themselves in addition to evaluating their progress on accomplishing these goals. Such data would have been helpful both for identifying which kinds of goals students felt most successful in achieving and for determining whether the individual goals of students who completed the STQ were qualitatively different than those reported by their STQ Non-taker peers. Closer examination of the nature of students' individual writing goals, and follow-up on these goals' accomplishment, could be yet another area for further research.

STQ and Subject-Matter Learning

The numbers reported in the "Student View of STQ Benefits" section of this chapter suggest that STQ Takers perceived the questionnaire primarily as a writing-improvement tool rather than as an across-the-board learning tool. On the ETQ, only a quarter of the students who had completed the STQ reported that doing so contributed to their "overall success" in their WI class, and only a fifth felt that it had enhanced their success with subject-matter learning, compared to up to 60% who claimed it had enhanced their writing experience in one or more ways. But the ETQ responses to subject-matter-related questions, shown in Table 4-6, may indicate a positive relationship between STQ review at the end of the term and students' self-evaluations of effort put into mastering WI course content and of their success in achieving both personal and instructor-specified subject-matter-related learning goals.

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[55] Such findings would be consistent with Hilgers, Hussey, and Stitt-Bergh's (1999) report that 68% of the students in their study claimed to have established goals for their focal WI course assignment. However, most of the students' goals cited by those researchers were not directly writing-improvement-related.

Table 4-6. Students' ETQ ratings of subject-matter-learning–related statements for the three respondent groups.

Subject-matter-learning statements on ETQ	STQ Non-takers (n=168)		STQ Non-reviewers (n=165)		STQ Reviewers (n=33)	
	Strongly agree	Don't recall or none specified	Strongly agree	Don't recall or none specified	Strongly agree	Don't recall or none specified
"I have put a great deal of effort toward learning the subject matter of this course."	41%	NA	32%	NA	61%	NA
"I have made significant progress towards meeting one or more of the subject-matter-related course outcomes/objectives listed on the course syllabus"	41%	18%	29%	18%	45%	12%
"I have made significant progress toward meeting one or more subject-matter-related goals that I set for myself at the beginning of this course"	26%	36%	16%	23%	36%	6%

Given the writing-across-the-curriculum movement's premise that writing and thinking are closely if not inextricably related, it would be interesting to ascertain through further qualitative and quantitative research whether the effects of STQ use do in fact extend beyond writing into the subject-matter-learning sphere.

Closing Remarks

The findings reported and discussed in this chapter suggest a potential association between STQ completion and increased student satisfaction with (and self-assessment of achievement in) their WI course, especially when supplementary activities such as end-of-term STQ review are also part of their WI experience. The observational research design of this pilot study, however, precludes using these data as definitive evidence of this association. Additional, more highly controlled quantitative research is needed to determine whether the differences in perceived WI experiences collectively reported by STQ Taker and STQ Non-taker groups in this study stem in any real sense from using or not using the tool or from reviewing or not reviewing it at the end of the term. Qualitative individual case-study research may also assist in identifying the effects of STQ use in a WI classroom.

On the other hand, the observations reported in this chapter certainly do not in any way *negate* the potential for a positive association between STQ completion and increased student satisfaction with the writing component of their WI course. For instructors in search of "low-cost" (time-wise) strategies for increasing the writing focus in their WI classrooms, this may be reason enough to try out the tool. Given the likelihood (based on behavior observed in this study) that an important segment of the STQ target audience—incoming WI students who are fairly neutral about the writing component of the course—will not choose to use this tool simply by virtue of being invited to do so, instructors who want to make the most of the STQ should consider administering it in class or as a required homework exercise. Because there appears to be a positive relationship between reviewing the STQ at the end of the term and students' sense of writing progress during their WI course, instructors should also ensure that their students include some kind of identification on the STQ (name or other identifying information) so the questionnaires can be returned to them

As is reported in Chapter 5, most faculty participants in this pilot study independently arrived at these same conclusions through their individual experiences with using the STQ—*and* were sufficiently impressed with the tool's potential to want to use it again. Along with registering their intent in the future to require STQ completion and include an end-of-term STQ review as part of students' course-assessment process, participating faculty collectively generated a number of additional strategies that, they believed, might also enhance the effectiveness of STQ use in WI classrooms for students and teachers alike. These strategies are also presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5:
INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE WITH THE STQ

"WAC means incorporating student responses into teaching. When we take student responses into account, we give new meaning to teaching for diversity." (Maimon 1992, p. xiii)

The only effective WAC is WAC that the teacher has made her own, and the only effective changes in teaching are the changes that the teacher herself has constructed. (Walvoord 1997, p. 28–29)

Introduction

In addition to looking at students' use of the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire (STQ) and the conditions in which this learning tool seemed to add most value to their WI experience (the research questions that are addressed in Chapter 4), this observational pilot study also examined instructors' perceptions of the STQ, how they presented the tool in their classrooms, and kinds of follow-up activities they tried with their students. In the study debriefing phase, which included both administering a follow-up questionnaire and conducting face-to-face interviews with participating faculty (see Chapter 3 for details), I explored with faculty ways they might choose to use the tool in the future, outside of the context and constraints of this research study. This exploration generated a set of recommendations for WI program directors (and faculty themselves) on how to introduce and support the tool's use so that WI faculty as well as their students will get maximum value from its use.

The following questions framed this second research focus:

- How did participating WI faculty present the STQ to their students, with minimal guidance from the researcher?

- Did faculty review the STQ responses? If so, did they find the information helpful, and did what they learned influence their teaching in any way?

- With more information about the tool's potential uses (gained through post-term debriefing activities), would participating instructors choose to use the STQ again in future classes, and for what gains?

- What modifications would these instructors make to STQ content and design and/or to their use of the questionnaire in future WI classes?

- What was the faculty experience with the follow-up end-of-term writing self-evaluation (ETQ), used by the researcher as a source of student feedback about the STQ?

The answers to these questions are presented below, following a brief review of the demographics of participating faculty.

Faculty Participant Demographics

The 22 WI faculty members who participated in this study represented all undergraduate-degree-granting colleges, with two coming from Agricultural Science, one from Business, one from Engineering, two from Forestry, four from Health and Human Sciences, eight from Liberal Arts (one teaching a University Honors College course), and four from Science (two of whom were team-teaching a WI course). The participants included full, associate, and assistant professors; instructors; and post-doctoral and graduate teaching assistants. Sixteen of the faculty participants had completed the university's introductory WI training seminar, and about half regularly attended other WI workshops and presentations.

As would be expected in a selection of upper-division, discipline-specific courses spanning a university's entire undergraduate program, these instructors took multiple approaches to integrating writing into content-driven classes—including a wide variety of formal writing assignments, different balances of informal and formal writing activities, and varying approaches to handling other elements of the WI curriculum such as revision and peer review. Thus, the results reported here represent a broad range of views on and experiences with the teaching of WI courses. In fact, the only clearly identifiable characteristics shared by all WI instructors who took part in this study were that they took the writing component of their courses seriously, made an effort to follow the study university's WI guidelines, and participated in the study voluntarily.

Results of Instructor-Experience Research

STQ Presentation and Administration by Participating WI Faculty

Q: How did participating WI faculty present the STQ to their students, with minimal guidance from the researcher?

A: Faculty used a variety of strategies for questionnaire administration and follow-up during the term. Many of these instructors reported that they were not fully aware of the multiple uses for the STQ, although this information was included in the recruitment emails and also appeared on the questionnaire itself.

Eighteen of the 22 participating faculty, representing 20 of the 23 participating WI sections, completed the "Instructor Debriefing Questions" survey (Appendix D) about their experience with using the STQ in their classes. All 18 faculty survey respondents distributed the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire during either the first or second class meeting.[56] To distribute the questionnaire, all 18 passed it out to all students (as opposed to inviting students to pick one up on their way out of class). Half of these instructors administered the STQ as an optional take-home exercise and collected completed questionnaires in a subsequent class meeting. The other half administered the STQ in class and collected it the same day. About half of the instructors who indicated some of their students had missed the class in which the STQ was first distributed made it available to those students in a subsequent class meeting.

In the memo included with the STQ packets, I encouraged faculty to consider having students write an "alias" ID on their STQ so that the survey could be returned to them later in the term without compromising their anonymity as research subjects. This option was also presented directly to students on the STQ form itself. Only one instructor chose to have her entire class use aliases, and in another class whose instructor encouraged the use of aliases, about half of the students did so. Students in several other classes occasionally chose to use an ID, but no other instructors explicitly requested their students to do so.

When presenting the STQ to their students, the degree to which instructors "talked up" the questionnaire's function as a teaching and learning tool for both themselves and their students also varied. According to the self-reports in the faculty debriefing survey,

- Five of the 18 responding instructors verbalized strong personal interest in the STQ responses as a way to learn about their students as writers, and nine mentioned but did not emphasize their personal interest.
- Four of the 18 instructors emphasized the STQ's potential for optimizing students' learning and writing skills improvement during their WI course, and eight mentioned but didn't emphasize this function.
- Only six instructors reported being aware that the STQ goal-setting section instructed students to record their personal writing goals on their course syllabus as well as on the STQ (in order to keep track of these goals during the term); and only one of these instructors verbally repeated this instruction to her students.

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[56] Two of the participating instructors were out of town during the first week of the term and requested that I distribute the STQ in their stead. In both cases, the students completed the STQ as an optional in-class activity.

Faculty Review of STQ Responses

> **Q:** Did faculty review the STQ responses? If so, did they find the information helpful, and did what they learned influence their teaching in any way?
>
> **A:** Most faculty did review the STQ responses, both on the individual forms and as a compiled data set. What they found helpful and/or surprising about their students' responses varied among instructors. The review process prompted several faculty to modify teaching approaches, assignment design, and/or response practices.

Fourteen of the 18 instructors who participated in the faculty debriefing process reviewed their students' STQ responses before forwarding the questionnaires to me for data compilation. For sections with five or more completed STQs, I also sent the instructors a copy of the compiled class results. All faculty who received the compiled data reviewed it. Table 5-1 shows the number of faculty respondents who reported having found various types of STQ information helpful and/or surprising in getting to know their students (and the reasons for this, if provided).

Table 5-1. Information instructors found helpful/surprising when reviewing their students' responses to the STQ.

STQ Information	Number of Instructors Who Found Information...	
	...Helpful	**...Surprising**
Students' perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses as writers	13	3
Students' assessment of their research paper writing skills	9	0
Students' expectations of whether/how taking this course would help their writing	8	2
Students' individual writing goals	8	2
Students' experience with revision	5	0
Students' opinions about peer review	5	2 (negativity was surprising)
Students' familiarity (or lack thereof) with the concept of writing-to-learn	4	2 (lack of familiarity surprising)
Students' career goals	4	0
Students' perceptions about writing in their intended career	2	1 ("variety" was surprising)
Other college-level writing courses taken by students	2	2 (not as many as expected or more than expected)
Other	1 (informal writing preferences)	0

Seven instructors reported that along with gaining insight on their students through their review of the completed STQs and/or compiled class results, this information also prompted them to adjust their teaching approaches or writing curricula in one or more ways:

- Five instructors adjusted their strategies for responding to student writing.
- Two changed lecture content to include more explicit writing instruction.
- Two modified the design and/or level of support for their formal writing assignments.
- For two instructors, student STQ responses influenced their choice of informal writing assignments, either in terms of knowing what kinds to avoid or making sure that students understood and experienced writing-to-learn.

Two other instructors, while stating that the survey did not influence their teaching during the study term, commented "But will in the future" and "Reinforced my teaching choices."

Faculty Interest in Continued Use of the STQ

Q: With more information about the tool's potential uses (gained through post-term debriefing activities), would participating instructors choose to use the STQ again in future classes, and for what gains?

A: Participating instructors indicated that they would use the STQ again, and in doing so would take fuller advantage of the tool's multiple functions.

On the faculty STQ debriefing questionnaire, 14 of the 18 respondents said they definitely wanted to use the STQ again in future classes, and the remainder said they would consider doing so. Respondents also indicated that they would make fuller use of the tool in future classes than they did during the study term, primarily by emphasizing its self-reflective and goal-setting functions for students (Table 5-2).

Table 5-2. Instructor uses of STQ, during study and planned in future.

	Number of Participating Instructors Who...	
STQ Functions for Instructors	**...Used Function in Study term**	**...Planned to Use Function in Future**
Information for me about my students	11	13
Way to gauge whether my students' writing- and/or content-related expectations for this course coincided with my own views	7	10
Opportunity for students to reflect on their writing skills and/or set personal writing/learning goals.	11	16

In the post-term faculty debriefing conversations, one of the most interesting discoveries was that many participating faculty had not been aware of the multiple purposes of the STQ, even though all of these purposes had been addressed in both the recruiting email and the cover memo included in the instructors' STQ packets. A majority of the instructors had perceived the STQ purely as a data-collection tool for the WIC program, being utilized as part of a graduate student's thesis study; they did not realize that it was also meant to function as a teaching and learning tool for their courses. But once the multiple dimensions of the STQ became clear to instructors, most expressed regret that they had not used it more fully during the study term and voiced their intention of doing so in the future.

Changes Planned for Future STQ Use by Participating Faculty

> **Q:** Would instructors choose to modify their use of the STQ in future WI classes, and if so, how?
>
> **A:** Most instructors planned to make the tool a more integral part of their classes both by ensuring that more students completed the STQ and by using it as a basis for discussion and follow-up throughout the term.

Changes in STQ administration procedures. Most faculty who completed the debriefing questionnaire planned in the future to implement STQ administration practices that would ensure greater student participation in this start-of-term activity. First, most would make it a required instead of optional activity. Most also felt that it would be important to link each set of survey responses to the student who provided that set of responses—that is, use the STQs not just to get a collective picture of their students but also to generate conversation and follow-up with both individual students and the class as a whole. Table 5-3 shows the distribution of participating instructors' preferences for future STQ administration procedures as indicated on the debriefing questionnaire.

Table 5-3. Participating faculty preferences for future STQ administration options

STQ Administration Option A	Number of Faculty Preferring	v.	STQ Administration Option B	Number of Faculty Preferring
Completion required	15	v.	Completion optional	3
Name on survey	10	v.	Anonymous	8
In-class activity	13	v.	Take-home assignment	5*

* All five of these faculty indicated that they would administer it as a *required* take-home assignment

Seven instructors said they would adopt all of the Option A strategies in Table 5-3 to ensure that students completed the STQ and took the task seriously. One respondent suggested that students might prefer taking the STQ online, an approach that could also facilitate instructor review and third-party research use of STQ data. See Chapter 7 for further discussion and recommendations on adopting this approach.

Follow-up Uses of STQ. In responding to the STQ debriefing questionnaire, most instructors indicated that in the future they not only would spend more time discussing the uses and benefits of the STQ when presenting it to their students but would also engage more fully in survey discussion and follow-up activities with their students.[57]

The debriefing questionnaire listed seven specific follow-up activities and asked instructors to indicate which of these (or any others) they would use in the future. Faculty responses are shown in Table 5-4. The last three items were written in by different instructors. In the face-to-face conversation with faculty participants, many mentioned plans to use the STQ information as a basis for responding to their students' writing, particularly in terms of focusing on student-identified goals.

Use of the STQ as a Goal-setting Tool. STQ Section 6, the personal-writing-goal–setting component of the STQ (see description in Chapter 2) appears largely to have been overlooked by faculty study participants during the study term. As reported earlier, for example, prior to the debriefing conversations, only six faculty had even been aware that the STQ explicitly directed students to record their goals on their copy of the class syllabus. Only one faculty member incorporated a "goals review" activity into the WI course.

But in the debriefing phase, with their attention directed to this component and the intent behind it, many instructors reflected on strategies they might use in the future to focus on these goals and support students' efforts to achieve them. While a few instructors thought it most appropriate to remain completely laissez-faire in terms of such support, others leaned toward significant involvement, including periodic check-ins on student progress toward their goals and identifying external resources that would support students' goal achievement. Specific strategies

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[57] Indeed, judging from the instructors' responses to other questions on the debriefing survey, surpassing the level of follow-up during the study term would not be difficult—only six instructors reported having made any verbal references to the STQ information in class, and none of these six made more than one or two references.

Table 5-4. Possible STQ follow-up activities listed on the faculty debriefing questionnaire and number of faculty interested in future use of these activities.

Follow-up STQ Activity	Number of Faculty Planning Future Implementation of Activity
Periodically asking students to reflect on their progress in meeting personal goals	10
Modifying assignments to support students' indicated problem areas	8
Whole class discussion of problem areas	6
Recommending resources to support students' indicated problem areas	5
Individual conference	4
Asking students to develop plan for meeting personal goals	4
Using students' responses to career-writing-related questions as material for class discussions/activities	3
Presenting a response summary in class, dividing students into groups, and asking groups to suggest ways that the instructor could focus on areas of need*	1
Referring to STQ information when commenting on writing assignments at both the formative (review) and evaluative (grade) stages of instructor responses*	1
Discussion of STQ information to gauge how well the course is working*	1

   * Suggestions written in by faculty

suggested by instructors for emphasizing and supporting the goal-setting aspect of the STQ included the following:

- Require students to complete the STQ and set personal goals.
- Show interest and encouragement for students' independent pursuit and achievement of their goals.
- Do some kind of end-of-term follow-up.
- Either one-on-one or in meetings with small groups, negotiate a "reasonable" set of goals that all students will be held responsible for achieving.
- Request the WI program office to provide a list of web sites and other electronic resources that might support students' pursuit of commonly cited personal writing goals.
- Have students make two copies of their personal writing goals, one to pass in and the other to keep in their notebooks, and then review these goals with students during mid-term conferences.

- At midterm, return STQs to students for review, invite them to reflect on their progress toward their personal writing goals, then hand the STQ back in along with a goals progress report. Repeat this process at the end of the term.

- Have students attach a goal sheet to the assignments they hand in, because "it's important for the instructor to know what students' goals are, in order to be able to see if they are making progress towards them."

- Take a broader perspective and have students formulate goals in two areas: (1) content development and (2) professional development, which includes writing skills, lab skills, computer skills, and math skills.

- Provide more coaching in formulating appropriate goals, because "students often don't know how to articulate their goals in writing. Possible goals should be identified and discussed."

STQ Form Modifications

> **Q:** Would instructors choose to modify the STQ itself, in terms of either content or design? If so, what changes would they make?
>
> **A:** The answers to both of these questions varied among instructors.

Fourteen of the 18 faculty who completed the STQ debriefing questionnaire commented on whether/how they would want to modify the STQ before using it again in their courses. Six respondents indicated either that they liked the STQ as is or that they would want to use it in its current form again before thinking about changing it, and the other eight proposed various modifications. The most widespread suggestion (offered by six instructors) was to shorten the STQ by cutting down the number of questions (15–20 seemed optimal to several) and/or by redesigning it graphically to occupy fewer pages. Not all instructors agreed that the current STQ length was a problem, however. One instructor explicitly noted that "the length of the survey is both reasonable and necessary for obtaining meaningful and usable information for both students and instructors."

Apart from shortening the survey, other proposed improvements included the following:

- Make it visually more interesting and "user friendly," for example by printing it on a heavier-stock paper that students could attach inside their notebook or binder for easy reference.

- Specifically personalize the STQ for the course, thus making it more clearly *part* of the course.
- Include some short passages of the kinds of writing done within the discipline and ask students about their previous experience with these genres.
- Make the STQ an online survey (this suggestion was forwarded during the face-to-face interviews).

Discussion

I originally hypothesized that most instructors who chose to participate in this study would take the STQ seriously as a teaching and learning tool, would find it useful as an information source about their students, and would find a variety of ways to apply that information in the writing portion of their course curricula. Instructors would respond positively to the STQ as an opportunity to add a more adult-learner-oriented dimension to their WI courses.

What I discovered was that most instructors' agreement to participate in the study may have been based more on a desire to support what they perceived as a graduate student's research project for WI program assessment than on interest in experimenting with a new teaching and learning tool. Apparently, the study information I provided when recruiting faculty involvement, and/or the means by which I provided it, was not effective in communicating the whole story about this tool. Even so, these participating instructors did find the STQ to be a useful information source about their students and their teaching.[58] Some did use it as a "formative instructional evaluation tool" (term borrowed from Cantor 2001), applying insights and ideas gained from reviewing their students' responses in their courses. And upon gaining a more complete understanding in our face-to-face debriefing conversations of the potential for the STQ to enhance both their teaching and their students' learning experiences, most expressed the desire and intention to use it again in the future and offered valuable suggestions for modifications and applications. Faculty were especially keen on making fuller use of the goal-setting feature of the STQ.

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[58] Interestingly, however, faculty debriefing results indicated that most instructors initially placed more value on the ETQ than the STQ; they seem to have seen it more clearly as a tool that could benefit them and their students and therefore more actively "pushed" it to their students. This is probably not surprising given that end-of-course evaluation is the predominant model for student assessment and course feedback.

Given that a largely laissez-faire, uncoached presentation of the STQ to WI faculty resulted in the tool's less-than-robust use by the instructors who participated in this pilot study, I would recommend to WI program directors and other individuals interested in providing this tool to their faculty that in doing so, they also arrange for faculty training in the tool's multiple uses. This training might (for example) take the form of a short stand-alone workshop, a segment of an introductory WI seminar, or an interactive online tutorial. Conceivably, such training could even be made a prerequisite for instructor access to the tool; it would certainly be an important pre-condition for formally measuring STQ impact on student performance in WI classrooms and/or for generating "valid and reliable" STQ data for WI program assessment as discussed in Chapter 6. With these points in mind, the remainder of this section presents recommendations on what to include in an "STQ Orientation and Training Session" for WI faculty and what a WI program might offer faculty in the way of follow-up support for STQ use. While these suggestions are addressed primarily to those in a faculty advisory/support role for STQ use, individual faculty members (WI and non-WI alike) can of course also draw from the following information in deciding how to effectively implement STQ use in their courses.

Faculty Orientation to STQ: Recommended Strategies for STQ Use

Faculty training in STQ use should convey the following information in a venue that allows for dialogue about these suggestions and strategies.

1. **Describe the STQ as a Multi-purpose Tool, with Emphasis on Its Classroom Uses.**
   Before administering the STQ in their classrooms, faculty should be aware of all of the tool's functions:
   - For students, the tool's primary functions are as an aid to understanding and focusing on the writing component of their WI course, and for self-reflection and personal goal-setting to maximize use of their WI course as an arena for writing skills development.
   - Instructors can use the tool for learning about the individuals enrolled in their course and for gaining insights on writing experiences and attitudes shared by class members. A review of students' responses to the STQ may generate writing- and career-related topics for group discussions and/or individual conferencing, source material for peer review and instructor evaluation of students' writing, and even writing-related course learning outcomes.
   - For the associated WI program, the STQ can serve as a data-gathering tool for program assessment and enhancement, as discussed in Chapter 6.

2. **Recommend STQ Administration Methods that Maximize Rates of Questionnaire Completion and Return**. As discussed in Chapter 4, pilot study results suggest that even with strong encouragement and interest expressed by their WI instructor, upper-division students are likely *not* to complete the STQ unless it is a course requirement. This finding brings to mind University of Iowa education professor and Project DEEP member Elizabeth Whitt's comment, in a presentation to the Oregon State campus community in Fall 2005, that faculty today tend to be hesitant to "impose" new pedagogies on their students. Whitt countered this hesitancy with the claim that "Anything worth doing is worth requiring."[59] In that spirit, faculty who want to ensure maximum rates of completion and return should consider adopting the following approaches when administering the STQ:

- Administer the STQ as an in-class exercise (to be completed on the first day of class if possible) or as required homework, and give credit for full STQ completion.

- When distributing the STQ, discuss the tool's multiple purposes, emphasizing student benefits. Students need to know that their teachers value this tool (i.e., that it's not "just another survey"), are familiar with its contents, and will be reviewing the STQ responses.

- Require name or other ID on returned STQs, both for crediting purposes and so the questionnaires can be redistributed to students for review during and/or at the end of the term.

- Instruct students to make a second, separate copy of their personal writing goals that they will keep with their course materials for reference and use throughout the term, and explain that they will be assessing their progress on these goals at specified points in the term. (And then build in opportunities for such review and assessment.)

- Announce that students will have the opportunity to revisit their start-of-term perspectives, as recorded on their STQ, at the end of the course in conjunction with completing a self-evaluation of their writing progress during the course.

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[59] In her keynote speech at Oregon State's "University Day" symposium on 20 September 2005, Whitt touched on findings of "Project DEEP" (Documenting Effective Educational Practice), jointly sponsored by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE). This project, which ran from 2002 to 2004, involved case studies of about 20 colleges and universities with higher-than-predicted graduation rates and better-than-predicted scores on five NSSE national benchmarks of effective educational practice: level of academic challenge; active and collaborative learning; student interaction with faculty members; enriching educational experiences; and supportive campus environment.

3. **Explain Customization Options (If Applicable).** The STQ was designed as a customizable tool and should therefore be made available to faculty in easily customizable form (for example, as a Word file rather than a PDF file). Instructors may wish to eliminate and/or add questions or modify the multiple-choice listings in some of the existing questions—for example, they may wish to change the writing-genre listing in the "Writing and Career" section or the informal writing options in the "Writing-to-Learn" section. Note, however, that concurrent program use of the STQ as a program-wide research tool, as discussed in Chapter 6, may require some limitation on individual instructors' customization options; and this of course should also be explained in an orientation session.

4. **Remind Instructors about the Impact of Teacher Modeling.** Schunk (2003) reminds us that "modeling informs and motivates" (163). In faculty STQ training, it is important to emphasize the importance of instructor modeling when using innovative learning tools with one's students. Encourage faculty to complete the STQ along with their students and to share their responses with their students, noting the potential for mutual benefit in doing so.[60] Remind faculty that referencing information and comments on students' STQs, in classroom discussions, one-on-one conversation, and/or individual writing responses, can make a positive impression on students by confirming that "The teacher heard what I said!" Faculty talking about themselves as writers with similar problems to those noted on students' surveys can also have positive impact. We all work on our writing.

5. **Recommend the Use of Follow-up Activities and Discussion Throughout the Term.** Most participating faculty who engaged in the post-term debriefing conversations expressed interest in using follow-up activities that would make the STQ a more integral part of their writing curriculum and that would reinforce the value of students' efforts in completing the questionnaire, thereby strengthening its impact as a learning tool. For most faculty, the shorter and more "transparent" and straightforward these follow-up activities can be, the better. Among many other options, possible follow-up activities—a number of which were generated by faculty who participated in this study—include the following:

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[60] Subsequent to the pilot study, several groups of faculty who completed the Question 16 "Formal Writing Problem Areas" checklist as a WI seminar activity observed that it gave them a sense of greater shared experience with their students and made them more thoughtful about strategies for working with students in these areas.

- Report back to the class about the collective profile generated by individuals' STQ responses, commenting on areas that were helpful or surprising. One faculty member suggested dividing students into groups and asking them to suggest ways the instructor could focus on areas of writing need identified in the collective STQ profile.
- Use students' responses to STQ questions as material for class discussion and/or individual conferences and as a way to "gauge how well the course is working."
- As a related strategy, modify assignments to support students' indicated problem areas.
- Use students' STQ responses to develop both collective and individualized peer-review and assignment evaluation criteria. For example, each student could use her or his self-identified writing weaknesses and/or personal goals to create a couple of "personalized" evaluation items to be added to each writing-assignment evaluation rubric or peer review checklist. Doing so not only would allow both the instructor and peers to comment on students' progress in these areas but would also increase students' own focus on accomplishing their specified goals.[61]
- Periodically check in with students on their progress toward their personal writing goals, and give them opportunities to self-reflect on their progress.
- Use some version of the end-of-term writing questionnaire (ETQ) as a final "self-check-in" on students' experience with the writing component of their WI course (see below).
- Suggest resources for students to draw on in support of their indicated problem areas. (This is an obvious area for WI program support, as discussed in the next section.)

6. **Focus on Use of the STQ for Individual and Collective Goal Setting.** In the faculty debriefing interviews, participating instructors particularly focused on STQ Section 6, the personal writing goals section, for better follow-up. Many noted good potential for STQ impact here. The vast majority of student participants in the pilot study set realistic and relevant personal writing goals that both fell within and went beyond the prescribed pedagogical scope of a WI course. As noted by several instructors, the potential uses for these goals extend beyond students' private pursuit of them. For example, peers can review a given student's drafts with that student's writing goals in mind, or the collective set of student

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[61] Schunk (2003) observes that "when people make a commitment to attempt to attain a goal, they are likely to compare their performance with the goal as they work on the task. Self-evaluations of progress raise self-efficacy and sustain motivation" (163).

goals can be used as source material for course writing outcomes.[62] See the Results section for an extensive and varied listing of participating faculty's ideas on using their students' personal writing goals in their classrooms. And in implementing these and other strategies, consider the following recommendations:

- In presenting the STQ to students, **explicitly request that students set writing goals that are both specific and achievable in the course time frame.** Locke's (1996) research indicates that such goals are more likely to enhance learning than are general goals such as "work hard in this course" or "improve my writing overall." Students who are inexperienced in goal setting may find it helpful to have some examples of specific and achievable goals.

- **Provide a structure for goal follow-up.** As the results of this study demonstrate, personal goals set at the beginning of a term tend to fall by the wayside (or be completely forgotten) in the absence of structured follow-up. Instructors should therefore build such follow-up into their courses, perhaps via a mid-term check-in or by requiring that students note both their goals and the strategies they are using to work toward those goals on each assignment they turn in.

7. **Emphasize the Importance of an End-of-term STQ Review**. As reported in Chapter 4, results of the end-of-term writing self-evaluation (ETQ) used in this pilot study indicate that students who reviewed their STQs prior to completing that self evaluation tended to rate their writing efforts and progress during the term more highly than those who did not review their STQ prior to completing the ETQ. Thus, while the end-of-term writing assessment used in a given WI classroom could easily take a different form from the pilot study ETQ and may not even be an essential component of STQ use, the opportunity for students to take a

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[62] The STQ provides valuable information about students' writing background, how they see themselves as writers, what their career goals are, what their writing goals are—i.e., the "audience" piece that, as Cantor (2001) points out, is essential for creating relevant instructional objectives and learning outcomes (73). Teaching to students' own identified needs will always be more effective than teaching to needs students have not taken ownership of. And as Locke (1996) notes, "high commitment to goals is attained when (a) the individual is convinced that the goal is important; and (b) the individual is convinced that the goal is attainable (or that, at least, progress can be made toward it" (119). The STQ provides the material for constructing course goals that will resonate with students.

retrospective look at their responses to their start-of-term writing questionnaires does appear to have value.[63]

Most instructors who participated in the study envisioned STQ completion as a whole-class activity that would be an integral and ongoing part of all students'—and their instructor's—course experience. Some instructors, however, may prefer to offer this tool to their students as an optional learning resource to be used largely (or entirely) independent of instructor involvement. For such instructors, some of the preceding recommendations may not apply, but it is important to emphasize that some instructor guidance and follow up would still be desirable for helping students get the most out of their use of the tool.

WI Program Support Activities and Resources for Faculty STQ Use

Services that a WI program would ideally offer in support of faculty use of the STQ include the following:

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[63] Participating instructors also saw the ETQ as a useful course and teaching evaluation tool. During study debriefing, one instructor remarked that "I'm impressed by what they think they got out of the course in terms of skills and knowledge of content. It's hard to gauge that." Another noted that the two most important pieces of information provided by the ETQ were "students' perceived improvement in writing skill" and ratings that "emphasized our little attention to informal writing." A third was disappointed in his students' responses regarding peer review and requested help from the WI program for improving his teaching in that area. And a fourth instructor commented that the ETQ responses brought to his attention the fact that he wasn't sufficiently addressing career-oriented writing, and he requested WI office assistance in finding or developing writing assignments that would remedy this situation. Finally, about half of the participating instructors felt that ETQ results could also be helpful at the department level in assessing upper-division students' awareness and achievement of department communications outcomes. Almost all expressed interest in using the ETQ again in conjunction with the STQ. Faculty input and my own reflection on the ETQ design and contents suggest that the tool could be improved substantially as a feedback device for faculty as well for assessing STQ impact. Modifications might include the following: (1) Tie the ETQ more explicitly to the STQ by ensuring that students review their STQs prior to completing the ETQ. (2) Ensure that the ETQ addresses each of the writing and professional development areas that the STQ addresses. (3) As with the STQ, utilize the ETQ as an informal, ungraded but required assignment; and in presenting it to students, fully explain its purpose. (One instructor envisioned having students attach the ETQ to their final paper as a required component of that assignment.) (4) Ask students not only to rate their progress, but also to explain what specifically prompted that progress. (5) Ask students to provide identification (not necessarily their names, however) on both questionnaires to allow correlation of individual ETQ and STQ results. Timing of administration should also be considered. Several instructors commented that their students also had had to complete several other end-of-term evaluations and indicated that in subsequent courses they might try administering the ETQ prior to the last week of class or possibly the final exam session.

- **Faculty orientation and training in STQ use** as discussed in the preceding section.

- **STQ report generation for individual courses.** Results of this pilot study suggest that faculty who use the STQ are interested in seeing their students' responses to it. The easiest means of doing so is by viewing the data in report form. Regardless of whether formal campus-wide research is being conducted, a WI program could support individual faculty's use of the tool by providing an easy means of compiling students' STQ responses and of generating a report, or even offering to do that work *for* WI faculty. For the study, I designed an Excel spreadsheet in which to compile class STQ responses, a tool that allowed easy viewing of counts and averages of quantitative data. Other database and reporting software might also be considered; and both WI faculty and survey research center expertise might be called upon in designing an STQ data-entry and reporting system. Note also that report generation might be facilitated by converting the STQ to an online tool. See Chapter 7 for further comments on this option.

- **"Toolbox" of writing and learning resources** that instructors can offer in support of students' personal writing goals, especially those that move beyond the prescribed WI courses writing focuses and/or a given instructor's writing and teaching expertise. For example, the WI program, possibly in collaboration with the campus writing center, could generate a series of online and/or print modules supporting skills improvement in areas such as grammar, spelling, conciseness, introductions and conclusions, and even time-management. Links to these resources could be included in an "STQ Support" section of the WI program web site.

- **More faculty development efforts in the area of textual genres and characteristics of "good writing" in workplaces associated with different disciplines.** In promoting the integration of "working English" into academic curricula, Mary Sue Garay (1998, "Working English") recommends that faculty themselves spend time in the business world in order to gain the experiences that lead to "workplace-sensitive language and literature projects" (45). Given that this option may not be universally available to academic faculty, a next-best solution might be for WI programs to bring more of this knowledge into the university and make it available to faculty through workshops or other informational venues.

Feedback from participating WI instructors in this pilot study suggests that in addition to the STQ's primary function of increasing student engagement and instrumentality in upper-

division WI courses, use of this tool can also shift faculty's role as WI course deliverers. It can help them develop a more complete picture of their students as writers and future professionals, select more relevant writing activities and assignments, refine their teaching strategies based on student needs and goals, and identify their own needs for instructional support and resources from the WI program. Not all teachers will be interested in taking advantage of these opportunities, of course, nor should they be required to do so. But for those who do have such interest, the STQ provides the means for faculty to move away from a "conduit" role of delivering a generic, prescribed WI curriculum (to use Barbara Walvoord's 1997 schema) and into the roles of "creator," "collaborator," and "client-customer," in which they play a more proactive and instrumental part in determining the nature and scope of their students' WI experience by customizing the curriculum to these students' particular needs.

CHAPTER 6:
THE STQ AS A THIRD-PARTY RESEARCH TOOL

"Student self-evaluation is primarily a learning strategy, but it is also a promising assessment approach: While enriching learning for students, student self-evaluations can also help teachers and institutions learn about student learning." (MacGregor 1993, p.1)

"Those who would change curriculum must become ethnographers of their own campus." (Maimon 1992, p. xi)

Introduction

Chapter 4 reported on the student experience with the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire (STQ). Pilot study results show that students who completed the STQ, whether on their own or as an in-class activity, tended to take the effort seriously, fill out the questionnaire completely, and use the tool for reflection and goal-setting. These students saw the tool as something that could help them with their writing, and study results suggest that such benefits may have been enhanced by students' end-of-course review of their STQ responses. Chapter 5 described participating instructors' experience with using this tool in their classrooms, which was also positive. Most of these instructors not only hoped to continue using the STQ beyond the pilot study but in doing so planned to implement follow-up and review activities that would more fully utilize the STQ as a teaching and learning device in their WI classrooms.

Given these positive outcomes of STQ use for the primary audiences in this pilot study, Chapter 6 turns to the secondary, "added-value" use of this tool: as a vehicle for information-gathering and program assessment for third parties such as WI directors, college deans and department heads, curriculum developers, and other program stakeholders. The 26-question STQ generates a great deal of information that appears to be useful to individual student respondents and their course instructors. Might a WI program as a whole also benefit from access to these data? Pilot study results point toward a positive answer to this question.

As has been noted in previous chapters, the primary intent of this observational pilot study was to begin to assess the STQ's effectiveness by observing how instructors and students at the study university put the tool to work with only minimal direction from the researcher–tool designer. Given the resulting inconsistencies among participating WI sections in both questionnaire administration procedures and STQ return rates, it would be inappropriate to characterize the study university's entire WI population based on information provided by the

study sample of STQ-takers. But on the other hand, WI stakeholders who do review this information are certainly taking a step toward becoming—to repeat Elaine Maimon's words quoted in the Chapter 6 epigraph—ethnographers of their own campus. In representing numerous (and varied) student voices from multiple WI sections across the university, the STQ data gathered in this pilot study can help program planners and policy makers better understand the WI student experience, which in turn might trigger ideas for improving the institution's writing curriculum and WI program strategies. There are many possible uses for STQ data at the program level. By way of illustration, this chapter takes a look at pilot study results for several STQ questions and discusses their potential contributions to program planning and assessment efforts in the following areas:

- Verifying assumptions about incoming WI students' prior college-level writing experience.
- Confirming (or complicating) guiding WAC principles that inform WI program policies and practices.
- Suggesting areas for innovation and improvement in faculty training and WI program direction.

Using the STQ to Verify Assumptions about WI Students' Prior College-level Writing Experience

The curricula of most upper-division WI courses are built on various assumptions about students' previous college writing experience. By asking students to self-report on various aspects of their writing experience, the STQ helps verify the accuracy of these assumptions, possibly leading to adjustments in the WI course writing component and/or lower-division, preparatory writing curricula.

Verifying Incoming WI Students' Prior Writing Courses

A complaint expressed frequently by WI faculty throughout the study university is that many of their incoming students lack certain basic skills that these faculty feel all students should have acquired in the university's first-year writing course and other lower-division "service composition" classes which, while required for their major, are offered through the English department. The STQ pilot study results for Question 5—which asks students to indicate whether (and where) they have taken specific service writing courses at the study university—may shed light on this situation.

Virtually all of the pilot study respondents (254 out of 256) reported having completed Oregon State's required first-year composition course ("Writing 121"). However, only 44% of these students took this course *at* OSU, while 11% took it at another four-year college, 29% took it at a community college, and 15% took it as a pre-college course.

In addition to Writing 121,

- 30% of the 256 STQ respondents had also taken business writing, mostly at OSU.

- 32% had also taken technical writing, again mostly at OSU. Generally, the students in this subset differed from those in the subset that had taken business writing.

- 15% had taken *one* undergraduate-level writing course other than business or technical writing—for example, research writing, poetry, or a speech or philosophy writing course. Only 12 of the 39 respondents in this subset had also taken business and/or technical writing.

- 7% had taken *two or more* undergraduate-level writing courses other than business or technical writing. Of these 17 respondents in this subset, two had also taken business or technical writing.

- 27% reported having taken *no* writing courses beyond first-year writing.

If these results are representative of the larger pool of WI students at the study university (something that could be verified by further research), they indicate that while virtually all incoming WI students appear to have fulfilled the university's first-year writing requirement, over half of them completed this requirement at another institution. Furthermore, only about three of every four incoming WI students at the study university have taken *any* writing course other than first-year composition prior to their WI course, and far fewer have taken two or more such courses. What this information suggests is that the aforementioned faculty expectation that WI students are coming into their course with a common set of writing-course experiences and can therefore be expected to have a common set of writing skills—including those explicitly addressed in the study university's first-year writing curriculum, such as library research and summarizing—may be unrealistic.

It also suggests that the best way to address WI faculty concerns and to ensure that their incoming students have the writing skills deemed "essential" in their major would be to supplement the service-writing course requirements for the major with writing instruction in lower-division courses within the major. Students' responses to STQ Question 5 could be shared by the WI program director with deans and department heads to support an argument for

developing "writing-infused" undergraduate curricula that might better prepare students as communicators in their chosen fields.

Verifying Incoming WI Students' Prior Experience with Writing-to-Learn Strategies

All WI courses at the study university are supposed to include informal, writing-to-learn (WTL) activities that promote critical thinking to enhance and extend content learning. To gauge students' familiarity and experience with this use of writing (if not with the term that describes it[64]), STQ Question 23 lists a representative sample of informal writing strategies used in WI courses at the study university and asks students which of these they have found helpful in their academic studies and/or other areas of their lives. Figure 6-1 shows the pilot study results for this question.

Percentages of STQ respondents who had previously used each listed strategy were calculated by adding the number of "Yes" and "No" responses for the strategy[65] and dividing by 256; results range from a low of 75% (for writing prompts) to a high of 98% for note-taking. These data suggest that most incoming WI students at the study university have had prior experience with a variety of WTL strategies, including some not mentioned in the Question 23 listing. [66] Moreover, since 96% of the STQ respondents reported being first-time WI-course takers, their responses to Question 23 imply that WTL must be a part of many *non*-WI courses at the study university—good news indeed from a WAC advocate's perspective.

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[64] The first question in the Writing-to-Learn section of the STQ asked students if they were acquainted with the term "writing-to-learn." Of the 256 respondents to that question, 223, or 87%, claimed not to recognize the term. Of the 33 who did claim familiarity with it, less than half offered definitions consistent with standard WAC usage (e.g. informal use of writing as a tool for critical thinking and self-reflection, making sense of new concepts, figuring out what to say/write about something and how to say/write it, expanding the depth/breadth of content knowledge, and so forth). The remainder defined it as either learning about a given topic by doing a paper on that topic or learning how to write by writing.

[65] Presumably, students who answered "No" must have tried the strategy; otherwise they would not have known that it didn't work well for them.

[66] Five respondents, for example, mentioned additional WTL techniques that they found helpful, including "Abstract writing," "Reading, understanding and responding to medical data and reports," and "Professor [X]'s rigorous & defined expository paragraphs," "Rewriting notes," and "Sitting down w/ coffee and a schoolmate and talking about what we've read, experience[d]. Helps!"

	Note-Taking	Outlining/Idea Grouping	Freewriting or brainstorming	Summarizing/ Paraphrasing	Reflective journal or notebook	In-class WTL Activities	Writing Prompts
■ Yes	239	221	177	171	134	115	109
☐ No	12	29	63	61	71	108	84
■ Never Tried	1	4	13	21	48	25	57
☐ No response	4	2	3	3	3	8	6
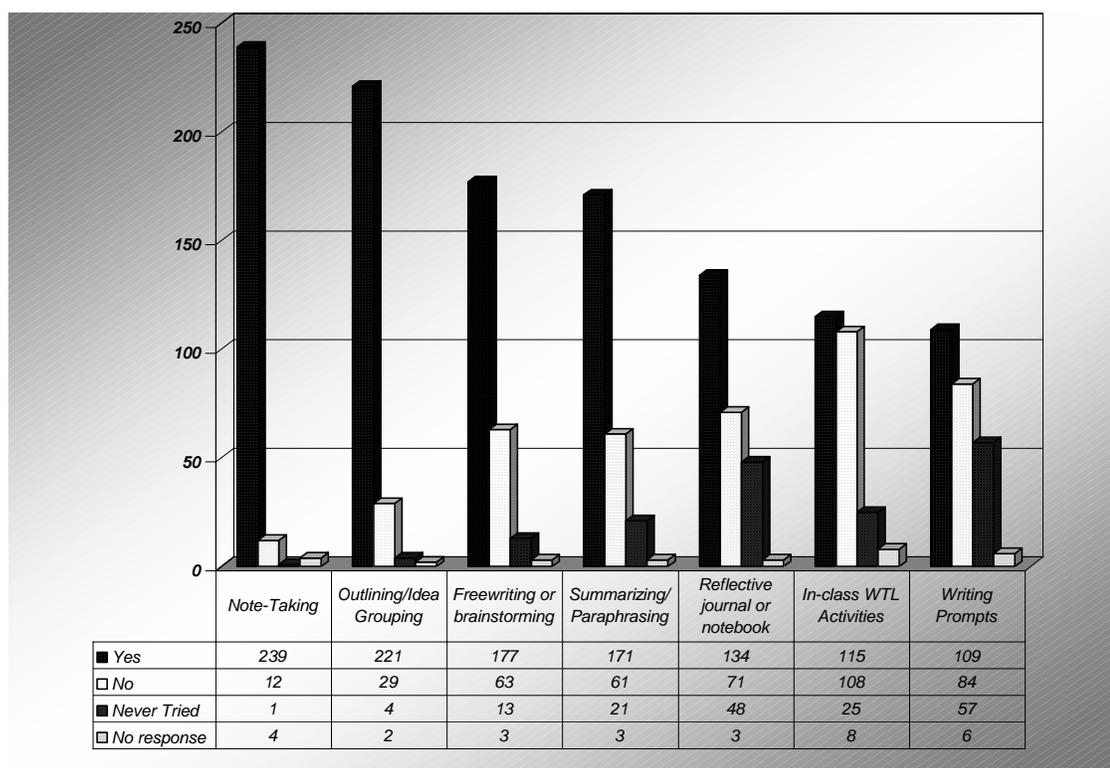
Figure 6-1. Pilot study responses to STQ Question 23: "Which, if any, of the following informal writing strategies have been helpful in your academic studies and/or other areas of your life? For each strategy, indicate YES, NO, or Never Tried (NT)."

On the other hand, students' responses to Question 23 also imply that their opinions vary widely as to the contributions of the listed WTL approaches to their academic (and life) success. As Figure 6-1 shows, the STQ respondents who had previously tried note-taking were almost universally positive about this learning approach, while activities more widely regarded in WAC circles as "true" writing-to-learn strategies[67] received substantially more mixed reviews by their respective users. These results may simply reflect the fact that recording what someone else says

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[67] To elaborate, Thaiss (2001) notes that "On the one hand, 'writing to learn' includes the conforming goals of recall and memorization, manifest in note-taking and journaling exercises directed to better performance on standardized tests. This 'lower order' thinking...contrasts with, and to some extent runs counter to, 'higher-order' uses of writing, also often pursued in some form of regular writing such as a journal, including doing synthetic or divergent writing, thought experiments, metaphorizing and other creative invention, and what cultural studies theorists...call 'critical work'—examining and questioning ('deconstructing,' if you will) those very terms and concepts that one strives so conscientiously to memorize and assimilate" (302–03). The latter, "higher-order" uses—strategies focused on "learning as conceptual change or knowledge change instead of [on] reproduction of knowledge" (Tynjälä 2001, p. 3) are typically regarded as being truer to the original intent of writing-to-learn (Warschauer 2005).

about a topic takes less work (and is therefore more appealing) than synthesizing and articulating one's own thinking on a topic; or that students typically are tested on their notes but not on knowledge generated in other types of writing-to-learn activities. On the other hand, incoming WI students may truly *have* had better experience with note-taking as a learning device than with most of the other approaches listed in Question 23.

In any case, given the resistance of some faculty at the study university to WTL approaches and the fact that privileging of this learning approach has also come into question by members of the composition and education communities (see for example Ackerman 1993, Ochsner and Fowler 2004, and Smagorinsky 1995), the variations in students' views about the effectiveness of different writing-to-learn activities, as communicated in their Question 23 responses, warrants closer attention by WI program planners and researchers. The typical WI faculty training model familiarizes participating instructors with a variety of WTL activities for use in their classrooms; instructors are then free to "select among these general activities to fit their needs, use these activities in particular ways to fit the subject area learning, and modify and develop new activities as the need arises" (Bazerman 2005, p. 127). While this smorgasbord, "take-your-pick" approach gives maximum autonomy for faculty to choose their own WTL strategies, it may also leave faculty with the impression that all WTL activities are equally effective and suited for use by students in all courses and disciplines. Whether this is in fact the case, however, has not been verified through research. A comparative exploration of the uses of, successes/failures with, and recommendations for different WTL strategies in different undergraduate majors could be an important contribution to WAC scholarship. Another interesting research direction would be to investigate correlations between undergraduate students' learning styles and "intelligence types" (as defined by Gardner 1983 or Kolb 1984, for example) and the types of informal writing students find most helpful.[68]

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[68] For WI program assessment, it might also be useful to monitor the frequency and extent to which faculty who use WTL activities in their courses explain the cognitive purposes of these activities to their students. In other words, are the activities actually being presented as writing-to-learn exercises in the true WAC sense (see previous footnote), or do faculty tend to talk about these activities in some other way, e.g. as warm-ups for formal writing assignments or as study preparation for exams?

Using the STQ to Confirm (or Complicate) Guiding WAC Principles that Inform WI Program Policies and Practices

The second program-level STQ application discussed in this chapter involves use of the tool to corroborate or complicate some of the current operating assumptions of the WAC movement—and larger composition field—that drive local WI practices. In the socially constructed universe within which contemporary composition theory situates itself, it may be risky to base local pedagogical decisions and program policies on the findings of studies that occurred elsewhere, some with very small sample sizes, some in very different kinds of institutions and student populations, some as many as 20 or 30 years ago, especially when we can easily check in with our own students on the questions and issues addressed in those studies.

This section briefly discusses three examples of how checking in with the local student population via the STQ can either challenge or confirm commonly accepted WAC/composition assumptions upon which a WI curriculum may be based. The STQ results discussed here concern students' views on peer review, their inclination to use writing as a thinking and learning tool, and their limited understanding of revision.

Checking Incoming WI Students' Views on Peer Review

In her discussion of response strategies for faculty across the disciplines who incorporate writing assignments in their content courses, Joyce MacAllister (1982) cites research showing that "peer responses to writing can be just as effective as responses made by instructors" and that "early intervention by other students can prove as effective as teacher-evaluation and self-evaluation in improving content, mechanics, and even attitudes" (63). Gerald Sims (1989) cites numerous student-centered benefits associated with peer review. These and other published claims about the usefulness of this practice for both improving student writing and reducing faculty paper load have supported the study university's long-standing emphasis on incorporating peer review in WI courses.

But do WI students actually value peer review as much as the literature implies that they should? Do they themselves perceive peer responses to their writing as being "just as effective" as their teacher's responses? The STQ pilot study results shown in Table 6-1 suggest that at the study institution, this may not be the case. A comparison of the number of "Very helpful" responses in STQ Questions 19 and 20 ("In revising drafts of your papers in courses within or related to your major, how helpful have you have found PEER feedback/INSTRUCTOR

feedback?") reveals that pilot study participants collectively valued past feedback received from their instructor feedback a good deal more than they valued past feedback from their peers.

Table 6-1. STQ pilot study respondent's opinions about the helpfulness of peer and instructor feedback.

Questions 19 and 20: In revising drafts of your papers in courses within or related to your major, how helpful have you found...	...PEER feedback (n=210*)	...INSTRUCTOR feedback (n=210)
Very helpful	28%	65%
Somewhat helpful	49%	27%
Mostly Unhelpful	19%	7%
Entirely unhelpful	2%	1%
NA (never received this kind of feedback)	2%	-

*Of the 256 undergraduate STQ respondents, 46 claimed *not* to have revised any drafts in prior courses in their major.

Seventy percent of the 210 STQ respondents who had previously revised papers in their major courses also responded affirmatively to STQ Question 21 ("Are there notable differences between the ways you use instructor feedback and peer feedback on your writing?"), and 130 students added an explanatory comment. Almost all (119) of these comments communicated the view that instructor feedback is more useful, meaningful, and/or trustworthy—and that students' grades depend on valuing and incorporating this feedback.[69]

Similarly ambivalent attitudes toward peer review have been documented in the literature; see for example Artemeva and Logie 2002, Chuck and Young 2004, Helfers et al. 1999, and Saito and Fujita 2004.[70] Further exploration of this phenomenon at the study

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[69] Representative comments include "Most peers provide useless or semi-useless feedback. I generally ignore most of it," "My teacher is grading; I will value what s/he says more and I sometimes assume I'm right when peers differ w/me," "The teacher is smarter and has more experience," "Peer revision is more positive but no[t] always correct," "You cater to your instructor, not your peers," and "Students don't take the time to really consider the texts they peer review."

[70] According to the research of Helfers et al. (1999), "Students may not trust the advice of their peers, preferring to rely only on the advice of what they perceive as the ultimate authority—the teacher. The perceptions of peer revision among students are mixed, from 'relatively unhelpful' to 'somewhat helpful.'...Their attitudes may be related to other research that shows students as having a 'limited sense of revision' and as being 'very forgiving of papers having underdeveloped ideas and claims.' ... Some students even fear that other students will 'steal' their ideas" (13a6-9). A questionnaire distributed by Artemeva and Logie (2002) to engineering communications students in a Canadian university revealed "five main concerns about peer feedback. First, students were concerned with their peers' attitudes toward giving feedback. They

university—or any university—might include fleshing out not just the local reasons for such ambivalence but also whether that ambivalence exists across the board or is concentrated within certain majors. For example, do engineering students, who typically engage in collaborative design projects and report writing, view and use peer feedback differently, say, from history students, who most typically do solo writing and research? Do undergraduates have different attitudes about peer feedback depending on whether the assignment being peer-reviewed is in their major or is in a course outside their major? Across the university, do students in different colleges have different opinions about the kinds of writing feedback their peers are best and worst at providing? Of the many ways to structure peer feedback, do different cohorts of students tend to favor different approaches? Finding the answers to these questions may help a university's WI program and faculty develop more effective strategies for eliciting and working with peer feedback.

Confirming Students' Inclination to Use Writing for Thinking, Learning, and Problem-solving Tasks

Toby Fulwiler (1982) argues that "not only is language the symbol system through which human beings receive and transmit most information, it is the medium in which they process most information" (16-17), and that the most important thing we can teach our students is to trust that "writing for a certain period of time will usually serve to create meaning" (19). Indeed, the concept that writing is a cognitive process, and so can be used not just for communicating with others but also to individually understand and learn, is a cornerstone WAC principle. However, the notion that writing is *more* integrally connected with thinking and meaning-making than are other cognitive activities, and therefore that writing-to-learn activities should be "privileged" in college courses, has been questioned in recent years both within and beyond the WAC community (see for example Ackerman 1993, Ochsner and Fowler 2004, Smagorinsky 1995, and Tynjälä 2001), partly in conjunction with the ascendancy of multiple intelligences theory (e.g. Gardner 1983) and learning style preferences (e.g. Kolb 1984) in educational circles.

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thought that peers would not take the feedback seriously. ... Students also felt that peers might be unclear about their responsibilities and roles as reviewers. Second, students questioned the competence of peers to give feedback. ...Third, students voiced a concern for the need for practice in giving feedback. Fourth, students expressed a need for the instructor's voice. ... Finally, students indicated a need for combined written and oral feedback. They thought that each process by itself was incomplete" (72–73).

To find out where students themselves weigh in on this debate and whether an emphasis on *writing* to learn would seem reasonable in their eyes, STQ Question 24 asks students to rate their inclination to use writing "as an exploratory tool to help clarify thoughts, solve problems, learn new concepts, etc." in their academic studies and/or other areas of their lives. Four of every five pilot study respondents claimed to be "somewhat likely" or "very likely" to do so. Were this finding to bear out for the wider undergraduate population at the study university, continued focus on writing as a thinking and learning tool in WI classrooms would certainly seem justified. (This does not, of course, preclude concurrent use of other techniques for strengthening students' critical thinking skills and helping them master course content.) As discussed earlier in this chapter, however, further research may show that more "discipline-conscious" choices of writing-to-learn strategies might enhance the impact of this practice for students in different majors.

Checking Students' Understanding of and Engagement with Revision

Citing Nancy Sommers (1980) and Marion Crowhurst (1986), Beeson and Darrow (1997) report a prevailing belief among composition scholars that "students...generally see revision as merely 'cleaning up' a text" (105)—that is, they tend to overlook the high-level, "re-visioning" aspects of revision. [71] But pilot study STQ results suggest that many incoming upper-division WI students have a more comprehensive notion of revision than Beeson and Darrow's observation suggests. Of the 243 students who responded to STQ Question 17 ("If someone were to ask you *'What does 'revising a draft' mean?'*— what would you tell them?"), 140 (57%) explicitly or implicitly included substantive editing and reworking of content and organization in their definition rather than limiting the process to sentence-level copyediting, style issues, correction of factual and grammatical errors, and/or other "draft polishing and clean-up" activities. [72]

Another interesting observation about STQ respondents' definitions of revision was the frequency with which terms like "fixing," "correcting," and "reviewing others' corrections"

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[71] The inclusion of Sommers' 1980 essay in the 2003 edition of Villanueva's *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory*, in a section titled "The Givens in our Conversation," indicates that this belief about students' views on revision has persisted over time and continues to inform both the theory and teaching of composition in the 21st century.

[72] Examples of responses that explicitly address substantive revision include "Going back through a paper and looking at the structure and readability," "Making improvements by editing and rewriting," and "See the strong and weak points, analyze, make changes when necessary." Examples of responses that seemed to imply substantive editing include "Developing ways to make a paper stronger" and "Checking all aspects of the paper for excellence."

showed up in these definitions, especially because students applied the concept of "mistake-fixing" not only to grammatical and factual errors but also to ideas and content and organizational issues. This suggests a perception on some students' parts that choices of content and decisions about how to present information can be absolutely "right" and "wrong," not simply more and less rhetorically effective. Perhaps in some students' minds, writing is not so much a series of creative, open-ended choices as (always) a matter of knowing which pre-existing formula is the correct one. Such an attitude does seem consistent with Nancy Sommers' observation that "in general, students will subordinate the demands of the specific problems of their texts to the demands of the rules. Changes are made in accordance with abstract rules about the product, rules that quite often do not apply to the specific problems in the text" (49). Further research to determine how widespread among upper-division college students (at the study university and elsewhere) this view might be, and continued efforts to effectively teach revision in both WI and lower-division composition courses and any other courses that incorporate writing into their curricula, would be of value to the entire campus community.

In reviewing students' responses to Question 17, a third interesting finding was that a number of students (13% of the total) specifically associated the revision process with peer or instructor review (e.g. "changing a paper & making corrections after someone else has looked at it and given you feedback"). This suggests that some students conceive of revision as something that can *only* be accomplished in conjunction with external review. A few STQ respondents actually equated revising *with* reviewing—for example, by defining revision as "Reading it over and suggesting corrections, grammatical and logical" or " Peer review, constructive critique." All of these observations about students' responses to STQ Question 17 suggest the process through which students come to understand the meaning of revision as a productive area for further composition research.

Using STQ Information to Identify Areas for Innovation and Improvement in Faculty Training and WI Program Direction

The primary mission of the WI program at the study institution is to support the efforts of faculty throughout the university who have been charged with developing and teaching WI courses in their disciplines. The WI program provides this support through a combination of training seminars, workshops, individual consultations, development grants, a web site, a quarterly newsletter, and other resources. Deciding on the content and focus for these resources and identifying the most important training emphases, however, is not always straightforward.

Faculty themselves may not be clear on what their students most need from them in terms of writing support, much less how best to provide that support. As a source of information about incoming WI students' writing strengths and weaknesses, course expectations, personal writing goals, and post-graduation career plans, the STQ can help WI directors, department administrators, and other WI-program–affiliated decision-makers in ongoing program planning, innovation, and assessment efforts.

Information about WI Students' Writing Strengths, Weaknesses, and Course Expectations

The first section of the STQ asks students to articulate their expectations for writing improvement in their WI course and to name a couple of their signature strengths and weaknesses as writers. Examining students' collective responses to these questions can help determine the extent to which undergraduates at the study institution "get" the purpose of the WI requirement and the degree to which this requirement appears to serve students' self-assessed writing needs.

Of the 256 undergraduate respondents in the STQ pilot study, 201 (79%) definitely expected their writing skills to improve, and an additional 34 (13%) thought their skills *might* improve. As explained in Chapter 3, I used a 13-category scheme for analyzing students' responses to the open-ended STQ questions. The first data column in Table 6-2 shows how STQ respondents' expectations for writing improvement were distributed across these 13 categories. For comparison/contrast, the table also shows the distributions of all pilot study respondents' self-identified writing strengths and weaknesses across the same 13 categories.

STQ results indicate that most incoming WI students who anticipate improving as writers during their WI course expect their improvement to occur in "high-level" areas such as ideas and content, organization, and knowledge of workplace writing genres. The fact that these expectations are consistent with WI program goals suggests that incoming WI students have an accurate picture of the purpose of this baccalaureate core requirement. On the other hand, what pilot study STQ respondents identified as their principal writing weakness seems somewhat at odds with the study university's WI program agenda: Twenty-six percent of students' "writing weakness" responses were conventions-related—almost twice as many as the two next-most frequently cited areas of concern (ideas and content and organization).

As is typical of undergraduate WAC and WI programs, the study university's WI program deemphasizes conventions-related instruction in WI courses and encourages WI faculty *not* to think of themselves as "grammar police." This stance not only aligns with the vision and

Table 6-2. Distribution of response items for STQ Question 7 ("In what ways do you expect to improve your writing skills as a result of taking this WIC course?"), Question 8 ("Name two of your strengths as a writer"), and Question 9 ("Name two of your weaknesses as a writer") across 13 writing categories.

Writing Category*	Expected Areas of Improvement (*n*=232) [†]	Self-identified Writing Strengths (*n*=464)[‡]	Self-identified Writing Weaknesses (*n*=468) [§]
General	17%	0%	0%
Citing Sources	0%	0%	3%
Clarity/Conciseness	10%	8%	12%
Conventions	5%	16%	26%
Genre	17%	2%	1%
Ideas and Content (incl. research skills)	20%	31%	15%
Organization	16%	16%	15%
Personal Traits/Experience (e.g. "nonlinear," "confident," "doubting myself," "I draw from things I've read and use those styles as influence)	1%	8%	6%
Sentence Fluency	2%	4%	4%
Voice	0%	2%	0%
Word Choice	3%	9%	6%
Writing Process	8%	3%	13%
Writing-to-Learn	0%	0%	0%

* These categories are described in Chapter 3.

[†] Of the 187 responses to this question, 49 responses listed improvements in two writing categories, resulting in a total of 236 improvement items.

[‡] 22 STQ respondents listed one strength; 221 respondents listed two strengths.

[§] 21 STQ respondents listed one weakness; 222 respondents listed two weaknesses; 1 respondent listed three weaknesses.

espoused purposes of the broader WAC movement[73] but is also consistent with the current, nation- wide lack of emphasis on grammar in writing instruction at all levels of schooling. However, given especially that grammatical correctness is one of the most important ingredients of effective workplace writing (see for example Paul Anderson 1985, Gray Emerson, and MacKay 2005, Jones 1994, National Commission on Writing 2005), upper-division college

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[73] In differentiating writing-across-the-curriculum pedagogical approaches from traditional content-course writing assignments, McLeod (1992) comments that "WAC does involve writing in the disciplines, but it certainly does not mean assigning a term paper in every class"—and then adds, "Nor does it mean (as some faculty in the disciplines fear) teaching grammar across the curriculum" (3).

undergraduates' lack of confidence in their grammar skills, as expressed in their responses to STQ Question 9, raises significant questions about how well our students have been served by the "anti-grammar" trend in American education—a trend whose roots are documented and critiqued by Martha Kolln and Craig Hancock (2005)—and how a WI program might help students shore up these skills prior to graduation.[74]

Information about Students' Problem Areas in Research-Paper Writing

The central, high-stakes writing requirement in WI courses at the study university is a multiple-draft, documented research essay, report, proposal, or other such formal document. STQ Question 16 keys in on this aspect of students' forthcoming WI experience. From a list of tasks involved in producing a formal research paper or report, students are asked to indicate any of these tasks that are typically problematic for them. The primary purpose of this exercise is to help students identify potential sticking points in their forthcoming WI assignment(s), information that in turn allows instructors to determine appropriate areas of instructional focus and writing support within their individual classrooms. An examination of Question 16 responses provided by students in WI courses throughout the university may also help a WI director identify new emphases for faculty development (both within and across colleges) and may even support shifts in existing WI program focuses. The pilot study results for Question 16, shown in Table 6-3, suggest several opportunities to use STQ data for these purposes.

Note: The keen interest voiced by WI faculty in seeing the college-by-college breakdown of student responses to Question 16 prompted me to include these data as well as the collective results. And while these data have prompted thought and lively discussion among study university faculty, it must also be emphasized that the small number of WI courses per college included in this pilot study, and (as can be seen in Table 6-3) the discrepancy of questionnaire return rates among participating WI sections and hence the widely varying sample sizes, renders

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[74] As Kolln and Hancock remark, "Many people have been attracted to the field [of composition] precisely because it gives them an opportunity to help people produce important kinds of texts. Teaching WRITING seems fundamentally so much more important than simply policing people's mistakes. On the other hand, students do write texts and texts need to achieve certain "standards," at least in the public mind. There is and has been resistance to a notion of writing that reduces it to correctness. At the same time, there is an uncomfortable sense that correctness issues can't simply be wished away" (24–25). The tendency of all of these realities to converge in writing-intensive classrooms across the university presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the enhancement of WI pedagogy and curricula.

Table 6-3. STQ respondents' self-reported problem areas in writing formal research papers/reports, both across and within individual colleges. Tasks listed in order of the frequency of their identification as a problem area by STQ respondents. Problems identified by 50% or more respondents within the specified populations are shown in bold.

Writing Task	Percentages of STQ Pilot-study Respondents Who Identified Listed Tasks as Problematic (Results Listed For All Colleges and by Individual College)							
	All Colleges *n*=256	Agricultural Science *n*=8	Business *n*=8	Engineering *n*=20	Forestry *n*=48	Human Health Sci. *n*=87	Liberal Arts *n*=69	Science *n*=16
Managing writing time	**66%**	**100%**	**63%**	**50%**	**67%**	**66%**	**68%**	**56%**
Writing introduction and/or conclusion	**54%**	25%	13%	40%	**56%**	**56%**	**61%**	**50%**
Generating first draft	44%	38%	25%	40%	42%	45%	49%	44%
Transitions between paragraphs and sections	43%	25%	38%	**50%**	44%	36%	**50%**	**50%**
Incorporating/citing tables and figures	43%	13%	25%	30%	46%	**52%**	42%	25%
Identifying a "workable" topic	41%	**63%**	25%	20%	46%	33%	**54%**	44%
Incorporating/citing referenced information	41%	**63%**	13%	25%	44%	47%	38%	38%
Sticking to topic; omitting extraneous info	40%	**50%**	25%	30%	**50%**	33%	43%	44%
Organizing info; presenting in logical sequence	39%	25%	0%	40%	42%	32%	48%	**56%**
Proofreading for grammar and spelling	38%	**50%**	25%	20%	**50%**	40%	30%	38%
Using audience-appropriate tone and style	35%	**50%**	13%	30%	33%	33%	39%	**50%**
Locating sources through library/Web research	29%	25%	25%	15%	35%	34%	25%	25%
Revising draft following review	25%	0%	0%	25%	31%	26%	22%	38%
Following assignment specs	18%	0%	0%	5%	8%	28%	19%	25%

college-by-college comparisons of these pilot data inconclusive. A repeat study with larger sample sizes is highly recommended.

Time-Management Focus. The fact that a full two-thirds of the collective group of STQ respondents, and more than half of the STQ respondents from every undergraduate college, identified time-management as a writing problem is one of the more striking Question 16 results and suggests a need in WI courses for greater pedagogical focus on the time-management aspect of writing projects, which in turn might require greater emphasis on the teaching of time-management in WI faculty training. Confirmation that students perceive time-management as a writing problem also has implications for other undergraduate writing courses and indeed for the broader field of composition studies. Assuming that students who manage their time better actually *do* produce better papers (and further research may be needed to verify this assumption), development of strategies for incorporating explicit focus on this skill into writing instruction (rather than relegating it to study skills seminars, business courses, professional training venues, self-help books, etc.) may be warranted.

Introductions and Conclusions. Another surprising result of Question 16 was the widespread student concern about "writing introductions and conclusions." Such results prompt thinking about the kinds of training and support that might help upper-division student writers achieve greater success and confidence in crafting those sections of their texts. Composition courses generally teach these skills generically and tend to present guidelines that are most appropriate to essay writing. But for scholarly and transactional texts across the disciplines, introductions and conclusions serve a variety of purposes and require a variety of approaches. Greater understanding of the specific difficulties that students in different majors encounter in introduction and conclusion writing might contribute to enhanced WI faculty training in this area; such knowledge might also have broader ramifications for composition pedagogy.

Discrepancies between Student and Instructor Views on Students' Writing Problems. In terms of faculty development, it may be useful for a WI director simply to compare students' and instructors' perspectives on problem areas in students' research paper writing. For example, anecdotal evidence at the study university suggests that faculty are more concerned about students' level of revision skills than (according to Table 6-3) students themselves are. Similarly, students' seeming inability to follow assignment specifications is a common complaint of faculty at the study university, which seems at odds with students' relative lack of concern with this issue. The opportunity to apprise faculty of some of these discrepancies, initiate discussions about

the differences in faculty and student perspectives, and recommend strategies for addressing and negotiating differences in one's own views and those of one's students could be a valuable feature of WI training.

I want to emphasize that instructors' own assessments of their students' strengths and weaknesses as writers are in no way being questioned here. Students' self-assessments of their writing do not always correspond with evidence-based assessment, and instructors tend to be reliable witnesses about tendencies in their students' writing, especially over time. The purpose of Question 16 (and indeed of all STQ questions) is not to determine whose perspective is more correct but rather to gather student viewpoints on matters on which they are not typically consulted.

Pilot study results for STQ Question 16 have already prompted several WI program enhancements at the study university. In the university's introductory WI seminar, for example, faculty participants now routinely fill out Question 16 as a springboard into discussion about genre differences among the disciplines and the need for different kinds of writing support in different majors. Comparing their own responses to the pilot study results for their college also helps faculty see that they have many of the same writing issues as their students and prompts conversation about how they might bring their own experiences into the work they do with their students. In addition, the introductory WI seminar now does explicitly include strategies for supporting students' development of time-management skills and their proficiency in writing introductions and conclusions. These topics have also been incorporated into the WI program's online "Student Survival Guide" (<http://wic.oregonstate.edu/survivalguide/>). The WI program director at the study university expects to use Question 16 results to guide development of individualized department presentations on relevant writing topics and to suggest topics for the program's department development grants.

Information about Students' Career Directions and Needs for Workplace Writing Preparation

STQ Question 10 asks respondents to list, as specifically as possible, their intended career. For individual instructors, such information can assist in targeting course content and devising relevant writing assignments for their current cohort of students. At the WI program level, however, exactly *what* students specify as their intended career may be less important than how many students *do* specify one. The higher this percentage, the clearer the mandate for a strong workplace-writing focus in the WI curriculum.

Before continuing with this discussion, I want to comment on the difference between "workplace writing" as I am using the term and "writing in the disciplines." The concepts are often conflated, but they are not the same. When academics talk about writing in the disciplines, they typically mean *academic* writing in their field, the use of writing assignments that incorporate disciplinary subject matter, and/or the application of disciplinary criteria in evaluating student assignments. In the introduction to his 1988 anthology on writing in the disciplines, for example, David Jolliffe characterizes the volume's central focus as "the nature and function of writing within academic disciplines and the way writing is taught, both purposefully and incidentally, in academic fields" (viii) and explains the book's use of "discipline" as meaning "a group of students, teachers, and /or researchers, usually affiliated with a common department, who collectively study and try to give explanations of similar subject matters" (ix). As used in this thesis, the term "workplace writing" applies to communication genres and styles that characterize what are often labeled as the "real world" arenas of business, industry, government, and so on, and the ways in which written communication contributes to knowledge-making and dissemination in these settings. Many faculty and students see training in these genres and styles as being the domain of business and technical writing courses offered through the English department, but they arguably have an important place in WI classrooms, where discussions and assignment content can be more specifically directed toward the workplace destinations of a given cohort of students.

Pilot study results for Question 10 indicate that a strong emphasis on workplace writing preparation is indeed appropriate for WI students at the study institution. Of the 256 undergraduate STQ respondents in this study, 236, or 92%, listed a specific career destination, only a handful of which lay inside academia, and only a minority of which clearly involved graduate school en route.[75] Pilot study respondents also collectively seemed well aware of the importance of strong workplace writing skills to their career success.[76] Such data support the proposition that students at the study institution should indeed be exposed to, and get practice in, workplace writing skills and genres as part of their undergraduate education. But many WI courses do not offer this targeted exposure, and providing resources for doing so is not currently a

[75] Students were not explicitly queried on their plans for obtaining advanced degrees, however. In modifying the STQ for future use, a question about respondents' intentions for graduate study might well be included.

[76] In answer to STQ Question 12, "How important are strong writing skills to success in your intended career field?" 67% of the pilot study respondents chose "Very important" and 31% chose "Somewhat important."

focus of WI faculty training. Working with WI course instructors to identify gaps in their knowledge about the workplace writing environment, necessary workplace writing skills, and professional writing genres associated with their discipline could be an important first step in developing reference materials, locating resources, and arranging presentations that would assist faculty in teaching to students' future workplace writing needs.

Closing Remarks

The evidence in this chapter suggests that uses for the STQ do potentially extend beyond instructional and learning support in individual classroom; the tool can also support WI program research and assessment. For such efforts, data collection could be restricted to specific departments, or it could extend college- or university-wide; data collection across multiple institutions with similar WI programs is also potentially workable. This chapter has presented several illustrations of how STQ data might help with WI program enhancement. Further experimentation with the tool will likely generate additional ideas for program-wide applications.

Data collected via the STQ could also conceivably support efforts not directly associated with the WI program. For example, such data could support longitudinal studies of undergraduates' writing experience at a given institution. They could be utilized in both the revamping and assessment of curricula for service writing courses offered through the English Department, such as Business Writing and Technical Writing. Data generated by the STQ could also be referenced in conversations with college deans and department chairs about specific types of writing support needed within a given major. For departments whose mission involves preparing "workplace-ready" graduates, students' responses to the STQ's workplace-writing-related questions could be helpful in program planning and might also be of interest to the departments' external advisory boards.

Study results suggest that continued use of the STQ to as a third-party data collection tool, in conjunction with its primary teaching and learning functions in individual WI classrooms, would be desirable even given logistical complications that might be associated with external research use (such as a continued need for Informed Consent releases from STQ respondents). Suggestions for streamlining this STQ function and improving on the seamlessness of combined program-wide and individual classroom STQ use are included in the best-practices summary in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> We argue for nothing less than human development, in all its complexity and
> orneriness, as the unifying purpose for higher education. (Chickering and Reisser
> 1993, p. xv)

> Assessment and reflection activities need to be fully integrated into instruction.
> (O'Neill 1998, p. 66)

This study grew out of my experiences as a graduate teaching assistant for the Oregon

State University Writing Intensive Curriculum (WIC) program during 2001–04. While serving in

this role, I had many opportunities to assist with WI training seminars and other faculty

development activities, develop new curricular materials and resources, contribute to program

assessment efforts, and acquaint myself with the history and scholarship of writing-across-the-

curriculum (WAC) in U.S. higher education. As a returning graduate student with an established

career outside of academia, I applauded the WAC focus on writing in the disciplines as a way to

help students develop as scholars and prepare them for life after college. As a practitioner and

advocate of writing as a thinking and learning tool, I appreciated the strong WAC emphasis on

writing-to-learn. Both of these interconnected strands of WAC made (and still make) complete

sense to me.

In working for Oregon State's WIC program and learning about similar programs

elsewhere, one of the most significant questions to emerge for me was "Why so little input from

WI students in defining the shape and direction of these programs, and why so few options for

expanding the scope of students' involvement in such efforts?" Walvoord (1997) partly addresses

that question in her remark that "though student learning is the goal of WAC programs, faculty

have usually been WAC's immediate audience[,] their change its immediate goal, and their

loyalty its lifeblood" (15). I did (and do) appreciate and value the strong WAC focus on faculty

development. But at the same time, it has seemed to me that WAC/WI programs—at least those

targeted to upper-division students close to graduation, such as the one at Oregon State—could

simultaneously be focusing more strongly on *student* development, not just academically

speaking but also on their development as workplace professionals. The simplest way to do this,

it seemed to me, would be to invite (and maybe even expect) incoming WI students to help chart

the course of their forthcoming writing experience so that it would have relevance to the futures

they were also charting for themselves. They could do this, I imagined, by identifying at the

outset not only what they wanted to get out of their WI experience in preparing for their future careers but also what they would need to do—and the kinds of support they would require—in working to achieve these goals.

But in order to make these calls, incoming WI students would need to conduct some kind of self-assessment in which they would consider their current status as writers, their prior experience with and perspectives on various aspects of the WI curriculum, the writing skills they anticipate needing in the workplaces they expect to enter, and any deficiencies in those skill areas that they want to address during their WI course. Such self-reflective and goal-setting efforts would likely be more effective as a structured and guided activity, and I envisioned such structure and guidance being provided in the form of a short-answer, survey-format questionnaire. Such an instrument, while taking relatively little time for students to complete, could cover a lot of territory and would serve as a benchmarking tool and writing goals record that students could access and review at any point during their forthcoming course as well as at the end of the term in conjunction with other course evaluation activities.

With a brief summation of WI program requirements included on the questionnaire, use of this tool could help ensure that all incoming WI students have a baseline understanding of these requirements and of what to expect from the writing component of their forthcoming course, especially in cases where such information is not also provided on the course syllabus.

For WI instructors, such an instrument would be easy to administer and convenient to review, thus allowing them to take their students' feedback into consideration when fine-tuning the course content and assignments. Use of a short-answer, survey-type tool for student self-assessment could also facilitate large-scale data collection across multiple courses and colleges, making this a useful resource for WI program evaluation and enhancement as well.

My idea evolved into the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire for WI Students (STQ) that I developed and piloted in this thesis study. The contents and theoretical underpinnings of the tool are described in Chapters 1 and 2 of this report, and the study methodology is outlined in Chapter 3. The results of STQ pilot testing, reported in Chapters 4 through 6, indicate that all three target audiences for the tool can indeed benefit from STQ use in WI classrooms:

- Students who completed the STQ in this pilot study seem to have used the tool for its intended purposes of reflective self-assessment and writing goal-setting, and their sense of their writing progress during the course appears to have been enhanced by an end-of-term review of their STQ responses.

- Instructors' pilot study experiences with the tool also seemed positive, although the scope of these experiences proved more limited than I had anticipated. Most of these instructors not only hoped to continue using the STQ beyond the pilot study but in doing so planned to implement follow-up and review activities that would more fully utilize the STQ as a teaching and learning device.

- Study results indicate that STQ use also has potential for improving an institution's writing curricula and WI program strategies, for example by providing a means to verify assumptions about incoming WI students' prior college-level writing experience, to confirm (or complicate) guiding WAC principles that inform WI program policies and practices, and to identify areas for innovation and improvement in WI faculty training and teaching resources.

Best Practices for STQ Use

As I also learned in this pilot study, the extent of STQ impact on teaching and learning experiences in a WI classroom will likely depend on how the tool is administered and how questionnaire completion is followed up. And these things in turn depend on how fully the instructor understands the tool's potential and the degree to which realization of that potential depends both on full class participation in STQ completion and on questionnaire follow-up.

Judging from the results of this pilot study, a largely hands-off, unguided approach in providing the tool to WI faculty is not the best way to instill such awareness; a more structured and interactive approach appears preferable. Ideally, in making this tool available to WI faculty—and especially in coordinating its campus-wide use—a WI program director would also offer formal training in the tool's use and might even consider requiring participation in such training as a condition for instructor access to the tool.

Such training could be delivered workshop-style, as on interactive online activity (similar to the online human-subjects-research training mentioned in Chapter 3), or in some other format. Regardless of the delivery approach, however, training should highlight the best practices for STQ use that are summarized in the following pages.

Before the Course Begins

Instructors who plan to use the STQ as a teaching, learning, and goal-setting tool in their WI classrooms should take time to do the following before the course begins:

- Get familiar with the multiple purposes and uses for the STQ, either by reading Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 of this thesis or by participating in STQ training, if such training is available.

- Review the existing contents of the STQ and decide whether to administer the tool as is or customize some of its contents (for example by changing the Question 11 listing to a more discipline-specific selection of genres, presenting a different selection of writing-to-learn activities in Question 23, modifying the workplace-writing questions, and so forth). An example of a customized version of the STQ (developed for a Mechanical Engineering WI course) is included in Appendix F. Of course, if the tool is concurrently being used for program-level research, instructors will want to check with the WI director before changing any questions whose results are needed for research purposes.

- Complete whatever version of the STQ will be used in the forthcoming class. Doing so not only familiarizes instructors with the contents of the questionnaire but also provides insights on students' experience of completing it. Completing the questionnaire will also allow instructors to compare and contrast their own self-assessments with those of their students and to discuss their own writing experiences with their students—a gesture that can have powerful pedagogical impact.

- Consider various strategies for following up on students' STQ responses, and build time for such follow-up into the course syllabus. In the absence of follow-up discussion and activities, STQ completion appears to have relatively little impact on students' WI experience. Especially important is incorporating periodic goal progress check-ins that students either do on their own, in conference with the instructor, or as group activities. Specific suggestions for follow-up activities can be found in the Chapter 5 Discussion section, but instructors are also encouraged to develop their own.

- Also, build time into the course syllabus for an in-class, end-of-term review of the STQ, preferably in conjunction with some kind of end-of-term writing evaluation activity such as the ETQ used in this study (Appendix B) or a "process memo" like the one shown in Appendix F.

STQ Administration Practices

In administering the STQ, the following approaches are recommended:

- Administer the STQ as an in-class exercise or as required homework, and give credit for full STQ completion. To send the strongest message that the instructor values the writing component of the course and expects students also to value it, the tool would ideally be administered during the first class meeting.

- When distributing the STQ to students, discuss its multiple purposes, with emphasis on its teaching and learning benefits. Students need to know that their instructor values this tool (i.e., that it's not "just another survey"), is familiar with its contents, and will be reviewing students' STQ responses. Most importantly, though, students need to understand that the tool is intended to support their own development as writers.

- Require that students include their name or other ID on their STQ, both for crediting purposes and so the questionnaires can be redistributed to students for review during and/or at the end of the term.

- For the Section 6 goal-setting exercise, emphasize to students the importance of setting goals that are specific and achievable in the course time frame. Remind them that goals such as "work hard in this course" or "improve my writing overall" are not appropriate for this exercise. It may be helpful to provide some examples of specific and achievable goals, but in doing so instructors should emphasize that these are only models and that students need to develop goals that matter to them personally.

- Instruct students to make a second, separate copy of their personal writing goals that they will keep with their course materials for reference and use throughout the term, and explain to students that they will periodically assess their progress on these goals as the term progresses. (And then, of course, build in opportunities for such review and assessment.)

- Announce that students will be revisiting their STQ responses at the end of the term as part of evaluating their writing progress during the course.

Follow-up Strategies for STQ Use

After students' completed STQs have been collected, and on into the term, instructors should do the following:

- Review the collected responses and make knowledge gained from that review an integral part of the WI course, for example by referring to students' responses in lectures,

discussions, and/or during conferences, or in writing assignment feedback. Weaving STQ feedback into lectures and assignments can make a positive impression simply by confirming that "The instructor heard what I said." Instructors who have completed the STQ along with their students can share their own responses with students. For some students, the revelation that their teacher also experiences writing difficulties similar to theirs constitutes a powerful form of affirmation and encouragement.

- Conduct periodic check-ins with students on the progress they are making on their personal writing goals. This could take the form of a three-minute update at the end of class, small-group conversations with peers, a mid-term progress report, or any other informal reporting strategy. Strategies for goals follow-up suggested by pilot study faculty participants are listed in the "Changes Planned for Future STQ Use" section of Chapter 5. Checking in with students not only makes it clear that their instructor really is holding them accountable for accomplishing their goals but also gives students an opportunity to bring up any difficulties they are encountering as they work toward these goals. Instructors may be able to suggest strategies and point to resources that may assist students in their writing efforts.

- Conduct an end-of-term STQ review as described above.

- Experiment with other ways to integrate STQ results into the WI course. Approaches found to work well can be shared with other faculty and the WI director.

Recommendations for WI Program Support of STQ Use in WI Classrooms

While the STQ was designed as a tool for use in individual WI classrooms, program support of the tool's use is strongly recommended. Such support might take a variety of forms, including (but certainly not limited to) the following.

Faculty Training in STQ Use

As already stated, the most important kind of program support for STQ use comes in making the tool available to faculty, actively encouraging them to experiment with it in their classrooms, and providing (possibly even requiring) training in its use. Such training should address all of the points addressed in the Best Practices discussion above. These points are discussed in greater detail in the Results section of Chapter 5.

Classroom Report Generation

The easiest way to review and archive students' STQ responses is to compile them into a report. Regardless of whether formal campus-wide research is being conducted, a WI program may be able to provide faculty with a tool for generating such a report or even (given sufficient resources) to do that work *for* WI faculty. For this pilot study, I compiled STQ responses in an Excel spreadsheet, which allowed easy viewing of counts and averages of quantitative data. More elegant reporting options may well be available, and WI faculty and/or local survey research experts may have good suggestions in this area. Report generation might well be facilitated by converting the STQ to an online tool, an option addressed later in this chapter.

Development of Writing and Learning Modules to Support Students' Writing Problem Areas

To support STQ use in WI classrooms—especially in conjunction with students' efforts to accomplish their personal writing goals, a WI program could develop a series of online and/or print modules supporting skills improvement in areas such as grammar, spelling, conciseness, introductions and conclusions, and even time-management. Such work might be done in collaboration with the campus writing center. Alternatively, links to existing web-based versions of such resources (located through an Internet search) could be included in the student support section of the WI program web site.

Faculty Development Opportunities in "Workplace Writing"

The area of STQ focus with which faculty are likely to be least familiar is workplace writing issues. Mary Sue Garay's observation that "some of us know the workplace, many of us do not" (1998, p. 45) extends well beyond faculty in the English department to many others whose professional lives are spent entirely inside academia. To support such faculty in addressing "real-world" writing issues with their students, workshops and outside speakers on workplace writing in different fields could be invaluable. Such efforts would admittedly be more straightforward for faculty in colleges such as engineering and forestry, whose students' career options tend to be more bounded, than for arts and sciences faculty whose students' career choices tend to be more varied.

Recommendations for Tool Enhancement Prior to Further Use

While pilot study results suggest that the STQ can be used effectively in its current form, I encourage additional review of the tool's content and design prior to the its "public release" by a WI program. Various refinements may be especially important prior to conducting any further formal studies of the tool's effectiveness. Several aspects of the STQ that I believe should be revisited are listed here; no doubt other issues should be considered as well.

- Some of the faculty who used the STQ in this study expressed concerns about the "look and feel" of the pilot study version. Suggestions for improvement in this area included developing a more compelling graphic design for the questionnaire, printing it in a different color and/or on heavier stock, and using a brochure layout that students could insert into their notebooks. Other solutions should also be considered.

- Changing the name of the STQ to highlight its personal-goal-setting function was also proposed. A more dynamic title for the questionnaire not only might increase the tool's appeal to students but might also better communicate the STQ's purpose.

Content-related enhancements to the STQ should also be considered, including the following:

- The questionnaire's length could be revisited. A few students (but only a few) who completed the survey complained about its length, and a couple of participating faculty members commented that their students tended to "lose steam" by the fifth or sixth page. On the other hand, several other faculty explicitly approved of both the length and breadth of the pilot study version of the STQ.

- More important (in my opinion) is fine-tuning some of the STQ text. As one example of the need for doing this, in reviewing students responses to Question 18 ("In courses within or related to your major, how many times have you revised and re-submitted drafts of your paper following peer and/or instructor review?"), I frequently saw substantial variations among the responses of students in the same WI section. In many cases, these students had gone through exactly the same sequence of courses, and so the discrepancies in their responses suggested to me that the introductory qualifier (i.e., "in courses within or related to your major") was either unclear (i.e., students' opinions may have differed on which courses were related to their major) or that students had missed the opening qualifier altogether.

Issues such as these could be addressed individually or as a group effort. Input from survey research experts would also be helpful in refining STQ design and content.

Implementing Concurrent STQ Use for Individual Classrooms and WI Program Research and Assessment

The most challenging—and for accomplishing the STQ's varied purposes perhaps the most fundamental—question regarding STQ enhancement is how to design a version that works well for both individual classroom use and program-wide data collection. Human subjects research guidelines require that STQ data used for program research may not have respondents' identities attached to them and that respondents must provide explicit consent for research use of their STQ results. But as has been demonstrated in this study, anonymity of results is not optimal for classroom use of the STQ, and for WI instructors the logistics involved in getting students' informed consent could reduce the appeal of using the STQ. Devising an administration method and reporting system that is seamlessly responsive to these diverging user requirements presents a technical challenge, but one that that no doubt can be successfully surmounted in consultation with survey research and/or web interface experts.

Mention of "web interface experts" leads directly into the next question, one that came up regularly during the course of completing this thesis: Can (and should) the STQ be converted into an online tool?

Several faculty who participated in the STQ pilot study posted an electronic version of the questionnaire on their course web site. One instructor required students to submit their completed STQ through Blackboard as a way of tracking assignment completion even though students did not put their names on the submitted forms. But for purposes of reviewing students' responses, compiling them into a class report, and ensuring that a copy would be available to students for end-of-term review, the instructor downloaded and printed out the completed questionnaires.

There are several arguments for maintaining the STQ as a paper-based tool. For example, having it in this form allows students to complete the questionnaire in class, which is one of the best-practices recommendations for STQ use. And despite our ever-expanding use of electronic media, many faculty and students still prefer working with hard-copy documents. An online version cannot be customized, which in my opinion is one of the tool's most compelling features. On the other hand, STQ customization may not be desirable if the tool is being used for large-

scale data collection. On-line survey completion has clear advantages not only for data compilation and report generation but also for using the tool in distance classrooms.

In assessing the feasibility of converting the paper-based STQ to an online tool, the following requirements for optimal tool use need to be considered.

- An online system should permit STQ identification for classroom use but also generate an anonymous report for research purposes. Form submission would need to include a step allowing respondents to provide (or withhold) informed consent for research use of their data.

- An online system should verify that any "must-answer" questions are indeed completed before respondents can successfully submit their STQ.

- Students must be able to print out their completed STQ for future reference, review, and in-class use.

- The electronic versions of students' completed STQs should be preserved and accessible for the duration of the term.

- Ideally, data submitted by students (even in cases where informed consent has been withheld for research purposes) would be compiled into a class report for the section instructor.

- All data with informed consent attached would also be entered into a larger research database that can be sorted by course, college, or other reporting criteria.

Note that use of the STQ as a cross-institutional research tool may also be possible in the future. Implementation of any such broader-based research applications will undoubtedly involve logistical challenges beyond those mentioned here.

End-of-Term Writing Self-Evaluation

The final enhancement issue to be addressed in this discussion is redesign of the end-of-term student writing self-evaluation (ETQ) that I used in my study. While the STQ can certainly stand alone as a teaching, learning, and research tool, most faculty who participated in this study were interested in continuing to use it in conjunction with an end-of-term self-evaluation. For both student-progress and course-assessment purposes, this is clearly the more desirable approach, especially if the content of the two questionnaires is more closely linked than it was in the pilot study—and this is the major issue that I hope will be addressed prior to further joint use of these tools.

For research purposes, the ability to match up individual respondents' STQs with their ETQs would be useful for assessing the impact of the STQ as well as for affording other insights useful for WI course and program assessment. (It might be interesting, for example, to use the ETQ not only to track students' evolution as writers during the WI course but also to explore whether the effects of STQ use might extend beyond writing into the content-learning sphere.) Thus, some method of cross-identifying the two questionnaires (that preserves respondent anonymity as necessary) should be utilized if possible.

An entirely different approach to ETQ modification would be to replace the existing survey-format version with a series of open-ended essay questions that guides students through a reflection on their learning and writing progress. While clearly being less useful for quantitative, program-wide research purposes, such an essay-based assignment could still cover the areas addressed in the STQ and in some ways might be more helpful to individual instructors. Examples of this type of student writing self-evaluation, used in a mechanical engineering class, are included in Appendix F. While in these examples, direct linkage with STQ content occurs only in the questions about students' personal writing goals, the mechanical engineering students who completed these evaluations were asked to review their STQs as part of the process.

Closing Reflection

Given an incorrigible habit, during graduate school, of challenging the practice of "voiceless" academic discourse in my own academic texts, and a strong interest and personal inclination toward the qualitative and naturalistic research methodologies that characterize most of the current research in composition and WAC studies (Russell 2000), a retrospective explanation of why I chose to approach the capstone experience of my graduate studies through a quantitative research lens may be in order.

To use the terminology of our field, the choice was a rhetorical move that I believed would help me achieve my project goals. I wanted to design and deliver a tool for use by faculty and students across the university, many of whom have limited experience with qualitative–naturalistic research. In testing the tool with this target audience and sharing with them the results of that testing, it therefore seemed to make sense to adopt an approach that would be more familiar to them. Compositionists are well aware of the persuasive, trust-inspiring power of being spoken to in one's "home language"; and for academics, one's customary research methodology arguably qualifies as being a home language. And at the end of this project, I frankly do not feel

that either doing quantitative research or writing it up in a (mostly) traditional way caused me to lose track of my voice. But in any case, what mattered to me more in this study than fore-fronting the researcher's writing voice was being able to offer to teachers across the curriculum a tool that helps them better hear their *own* students' voices.

In addition to considering the methodological preferences of my target audience, doing a project involving quantitative research also allowed (and pushed) me to expand my academic skill set. Designing and carrying out such a study was a substantial challenge that, as a first-time effort, I by no means negotiated perfectly. With prior training and experience in survey research design and methodology, it is quite possible that the current project could have served as the full-blown, formal STQ study which still remains to be done, instead of the pilot for that study. I am indebted to the OSU Survey Research Center staff and other individuals who not only helped me put the study together but also tactfully pointed out its design limitations and coached me in the kinds of conclusions and claims my research could and could not support. I acknowledge and take full responsibility for these limitations and flaws, while also being grateful for the opportunity to explore new research territory.

The experience does leave me with a larger question for the field of composition studies, however: would it be useful to offer training in quantitative research methodologies within our graduate curricula? Without that kind of preparation, are we producing scholars with limited abilities to speak persuasively with colleagues in other fields? I affirm this field's strong commitment to bringing ethnographic and naturalistic models into the methodological lexicon of academia. But if we want our colleagues in other fields to recognize and value our own preferred research methodologies, ought we not also develop a working knowledge of the preferred approaches of their fields as well? I believe this question should receive serious consideration by WAC scholars and compositionists in designing graduate programs.

*   *   *

In discussing writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) program assessment, Martha Townsend (1997) notes that "a theory, or some combination of theories, undergirds [every] evaluation process whether or not those positions are made explicit" (161). Many scholars will agree that this observation also applies to other academic work (including, of course, one's thesis or dissertation research). Moreover, from a social constructivist perspective, it seems inarguable that whether or not we view our personal experiences and perspectives as theories per se, they do influence our subsequent life decisions and choices; and therefore to articulate these experiences

and views to ourselves and others is to assume a more conscious and responsible role as navigators of our individual and collective lives. As Sondra Perl (2006) has pointed out, "there is an irreducible personal element in all knowing."

In that spirit, I want to claim as an underlying theory of this thesis study the personal belief that each of us (even as college students) knows a great deal about ourselves, and what we need to learn, and how we can best learn it. This knowledge may not surface, however, unless and until we are allowed and expected to articulate it to others. Taking every opportunity to invite students to give voice and shape to such knowledge should therefore (in my view) be a fundamental role of colleges and universities. Indeed, as Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser (1993) point out, "educationally powerful" curricula cannot be created in the absence of such invitations:

> More effective education requires taking clearer account of the differences among students and acting accordingly. Doing so does not mean catering to students, nor does it entail merely discovering what students want and providing it. On the contrary, the task of the college is to provide whatever is needed for learning and development to occur. And sound decisions about what is needed must derive from knowledge of where a student is, where he or she wants to go, and what equipment he or she brings for the trip. With such information at hand, intelligent planning can take place. But when significant differences are ignored, some students will be missed entirely and many barely touched (475–76).

The Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire developed and pilot tested in this study represents one such invitation. Its use in WI classrooms communicates to students that who they are and where they want and need to go as writers truly matters both within and beyond their WI course. Additionally, it gives their instructors and other program stakeholders an avenue not only for including students' goals and needs as writers in the WI course but also, as Richard Haswell (1993) puts it, for "convert[ing] the experience they want for their students' education into experience that will not be lost but end up part of their students' lives" (98).

As a teaching, learning, and assessment tool, the STQ can certainly assist in the development of educationally powerful writing curricula both within individual WI classrooms and across entire WI programs. I hope that others who choose to experiment with using this tool in their classrooms and programs will find it helpful for all of these purposes— and in their experimentation will discover ways to significantly improve the teaching and learning of writing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:
Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire Used for Pilot Study

Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire for OSU WIC Students

PURPOSE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

All Writing-Intensive Curriculum (WIC) courses at OSU share the following characteristics:

✓ *They are upper-division courses in which students write a minimum of 5,000 words, written work comprises at least 30% of students' grades, and writing is a major tool for learning course content.*

✓ *They focus on the kinds of writing done by professionals in related career fields.*

✓ *They include a researched and documented formal writing assignment.*

✓ *They include at least one assignment in which students revise and polish their drafts based on peer and/or instructor review. (Revisions count toward the 5,000 word course minimum.)*

✓ *They use informal writing activities to help students learn and think critically about course content.*

By asking you questions related to the items listed above, this questionnaire can help you clarify your writing expectations and intentions for this WIC course. Your responses will also assist you in identifying two personal writing goals for this course.

Additionally, the information you provide as a class may assist your instructor and department in helping you—and students in future classes—achieve your collective academic and professional goals.

SECTION 1—YOUR CURRENT WRITING SKILLS

Q1. Are you an undergraduate student at OSU? (*Circle one number.*)

    1 NO ⟶ *If you are a graduate, post-bac, or non-degree seeking student, please*
    2 YES   *continue on to question **Q6** now.*

Q2. What is your class standing?

    1 SENIOR
    2 JUNIOR
    3 SOPHOMORE

Q3. Is this WIC course in your major?

    1 YES
    2 NO
    3 UNDECLARED

Q4. Is this the first WIC course you have taken here at OSU?

   NOTE: WR 121, 214, and 327 are *not* WIC courses.

   1   YES
   2   NO ⟶ **Q4A. If NO, how many other OSU WIC courses have you taken?** ____

Q5. In the table below, please first indicate whether or not you have completed each of the following college-level writing courses either here at OSU or anywhere else. Then, for those you have taken, please indicate where. *(First indicate YES or NO; if YES, indicate where.)*

	Have taken?		*Where?*			
	NO	YES	OSU	OTHER 4-YEAR COLLEGE	COMMUNITY COLLEGE	PRE-COLLEGE COURSE
a. First-Year/Freshman Composition (WR 121)........	1	2 ⟶	1	2	3	4
b. Business Writing (WR 214)......	1	2 ⟶	1	2	3	NA
c. Technical Writing (WR 327)	1	2 ⟶	1	2	3	NA
d. Other—*List course name(s) and location(s)* _____						

Q6. Which of the following*, in your opinion*, best describes your current writing skills compared to most other upper-level OSU students in your major or graduate program? (*Circle one number.*)

   1   Much stronger than most others
   2   Somewhat stronger than most others
   3   About the same as most others
   4   Somewhat weaker than most others
   5   Much weaker than most others

Q7. Do you expect to improve your writing skills as a result of taking this WIC course?

   1   YES ⟶ **Q7A. If YES, in what ways?** _____
   2   NO ⟶ **Q7B. If NO, why not?** _____
   3   Don't know

Q8. Name two of your strengths as a writer:

   1. _____
   2. _____

Q9. Name two of your weaknesses as a writer:

   1. _____
   2. _____

SECTION 2— WRITING AND YOUR CAREER

Q10. Please list the career field in which you expect to seek employment after you complete your undergraduate degree (or after grad school, if you intend to pursue further studies.) If you have in mind a specific job position and/or employer, please list that information as well.

Intended career field: _____

Specific job position and/or employer, if known: _____

☐ *Check here if you do not know your career field, and go to* **SECTION 3, Q16** *now.*

Q11. Please indicate whether or not you expect to do each of the following kinds of writing in the career field listed above. *Indicate YES or NO by circling one number for each item. List any additional items in the "Other" option.*

	Will your work include this kind of writing?	YES	NO
a.	Correspondence via letters, memos, emails, etc.	1	2
b.	Web page texts for Internet audiences	1	2
c.	Reports or briefs	1	2
d.	Process documentation (lab reports, instructional manuals, etc.)	1	2
e.	Press releases	1	2
f.	Journal articles or books	1	2
g.	Advertising copy or marketing texts	1	2
h.	Project or grant proposals	1	2
i.	Other (*Please specify*) _____		

Q12. In your opinion, how important are strong writing skills to success in the career field you listed in Q10? (*Circle one number.*)

1   VERY IMPORTANT
2   SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
3   NOT VERY IMPORTANT

Q13. List three characteristics of "good writing" in the career field you listed in Q10.

a.   _____

b.   _____

c.   _____

Q14. In your intended career, what is your best guess as to the portion of your workplace writing that you'll produce *collaboratively* (i.e., several writers will contribute to the final document)?

1   MORE THAN HALF
2   ONE-FOURTH TO ONE-HALF
3   LESS THAN ONE-FOURTH

Q15. In your intended career, what is your best guess as to the percentage of your own workplace writing that will be reviewed by your peers and/or managers, and possibly returned for revision, prior to its "public" release?

1   LESS THAN 25%
2   25-50 %
3   MORE THAN 50%

SECTION 3—WRITING DOCUMENTED RESEARCH PAPERS

Q16. With which of these aspects of the research paper-writing process (in any field) do you typically experience problems? *For each item, indicate YES, NO, or Never Required (NR).*

A problem for you?	YES	NO	Never Required
a. Coming up with a workable topic—i.e., one that's interesting to both you and your audience, neither too narrow nor too broad, and truly controversial (if applicable)	1	2	NR
b. Locating sources through library and/or Web-based research	1	2	NR
c. Organizing the information and presenting it in a logical sequence..............	1	2	NR
d. Generating the first draft of your paper..	1	2	NR
e. Writing the introduction and/or conclusion...	1	2	NR
f. Sticking to the topic; identifying and omitting extraneous information...........	1	2	NR
g. Creating smooth transitions between paragraphs and sections	1	2	NR
h. Incorporating and citing tables and figures in your text...............................	1	2	NR
i. Incorporating and citing referenced information in your text	1	2	NR
j. Revising your draft after instructor, peer, and/or your own review...............	1	2	NR
k. Finding and correcting grammar and spelling errors within your text...........	1	2	NR
l. Using an appropriate tone and writing style for your intended audience	1	2	NR
m. Following the assignment specifications for format, length, style, audience, etc.	1	2	NR
n. Establishing and maintaining a research and writing schedule that gives you enough time to produce the best paper you can....................................	1	2	NR

o. Other (please specify) _____

SECTION 4—REVISING

Q17. If someone were to ask you *"What does 'revising a draft' mean?"*— what would you tell them?

Q18*. In courses within or related to your major*, how many times have you revised and re-submitted drafts of your papers following peer and/or instructor review?

    1   NEVER ⟶ *If you answered NEVER, please go on to* **SECTION 5, Q22** *now.*
    2   1 time
    3   2-3 times
    4   More than 3 times

Q19. In revising drafts of your papers in courses within or related to your major, how helpful have you have found *PEER* feedback?

    1   VERY HELPFUL
    2   SOMEWHAT HELPFUL
    3   MOSTLY UNHELPFUL
    4   ENTIRELY UNHELPFUL
    5   NA (Never received peer feedback)

Q20. In revising drafts of your papers in courses within or related to your major, how helpful have you have found *INSTRUCTOR* feedback?

    1   VERY HELPFUL
    2   SOMEWHAT HELPFUL
    3   MOSTLY UNHELPFUL
    4   ENTIRELY UNHELPFUL
    5   NA (Never received instructor feedback)

Q21. Are there notable differences between the ways you use instructor feedback and peer feedback on your writing?

    1   NO
    2   YES ⟶ **Q21A. If YES, please describe these differences in the space below.**

SECTION 5—WRITING TO LEARN

Q22. Are you acquainted with the term "writing to learn"?

    1   NO
    2   YES ⟶ **Q22A. If YES, what is your understanding of this term?**

_____

Q23. Which, if any, of the following informal writing strategies have been helpful in your academic studies and/or other areas of your life? *For each strategy, indicate YES, NO, or Never Tried (NT).*

Strategy Helpful?	YES	NO	Never Tried
a. Journal or notebook for reflection, problem-solving, record-keeping	1	2	NT
b. Freewriting or brainstorming to generate ideas and questions	1	2	NT
c. Using outlines or other idea-grouping techniques to organize thoughts and information	1	2	NT
d. Note-taking during lectures or reading assignments.............................	1	2	NT
e. Summarizing or paraphrasing a key concept, an oral presentation, a passage from your reading, etc.	1	2	NT
f. Generating test questions as a study strategy......................................	1	2	NT
g. Responding to writing prompts about course readings or lecture material	1	2	NT
h. In-class writing activities ("write-and-pass," "minute papers," etc.)	1	2	NT
i. Other (please specify) _____			

Q24. In your academic studies (or other areas of your life), how likely are you to use informal writing as an exploratory tool to help clarify your thoughts, solve problems, learn new concepts, etc.?

    1   VERY LIKELY
    2   SOMEWHAT LIKELY
    3   NOT AT ALL LIKELY

SECTION 6—SETTING INDIVIDUAL WRITING GOALS FOR YOUR WIC COURSE

Q25. This WIC course is an excellent place to develop and strengthen writing skills that are relevant to your major—skills that will increase your employability and contribute to your professional success regardless of your chosen career. To make the most of this opportunity, set some personal writing goals for your WIC course, as follows:

➜ *Think for a few moments about the kinds of writing you expect to do in your first job after graduation. Think, too, about the kind of writer you want to be in your first job.*

➜ *Next, think about any gaps that exist between your current writing skills and those you want—or will need—to have in your future workplace. To close these gaps, what needs to change about your writing?*

➜ *With these thoughts in mind, formulate two writing goals that **you** want to achieve in this WIC class.*

  *NOTE: These goals may or may not coincide with your instructor's specified writing goals for this course. Whether they do coincide is not important. These are your **individual writing goals** for this class, and the strategies you develop for achieving them will be largely up to you.*

➜ *Finally, **record your two writing goals both in the box below and on your course syllabus.***

My two writing goals for this class are:

  1.

  2.

Q26. Please use the remaining space to make any comments you may have about WIC courses in general, this course specifically, and/or this questionnaire. Thank you again for completing the questionnaire.

Appendix B:
End-of-Term Writing Self-Evaluation Used for Pilot Study

Course/Section #: _____

END-OF-TERM WRITING SELF-EVALUATION
for OSU WIC Students

THIS WRITING SELF-EVALUATION HAS TWO PURPOSES:

(1) It gives you a chance to <u>assess and reflect on your progress in this WIC</u> course in the areas of writing, subject-matter learning, and career preparation.

Taking the time to reflect on your learning experiences can be extremely effective both for consolidating the knowledge you have gained and for identifying factors that have enhanced and/or interfered with your learning process.

(2) It's an opportunity to <u>provide valuable course-related feedback</u> to your instructor and offer suggestions for future course improvements.

This self-evaluation is anonymous; and as with the standard OSU course evaluation that you'll also complete, the results will not be available to your instructor until after course grades have been submitted. Please answer all questions candidly.

PART ONE—BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Q1. Are you an undergraduate student at OSU? (*Circle one number.*)

    1   NO   ⟶   *If you are a graduate, post-bac, or non-degree seeking student, please*
    2   YES   *continue on to question **Q4** now.*

Q2. What is your class standing?

    1   SENIOR
    2   JUNIOR
    3   SOPHOMORE

Q3. Is this WIC course in your major?

    1   YES
    2   NO
    3   UNDECLARED

Q4. Did you complete the "Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire for WIC Students"?

    1   YES
    2   NO   ***If you answered "NO" or "DON'T REMEMBER,"***
    3   DON'T REMEMBER   ⟶   ***please skip ahead to <u>PART TWO</u> (Q10), on page 3.***

If you answered "YES" to Q4, please go to page 2 and complete the rest of this section, which seeks information about students' uses of and experiences with the Start-of- Term Writing Questionnaire. Note that your responses are highly valued and will influence future uses of the questionnaire.

Q5. When you filled out the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire at the beginning of this term, how seriously did you take that effort? (*Circle one number.*)

1 NOT AT ALL SERIOUSLY *(i.e., Filled out the questionnaire only because I had to; rushed through it without fully considering the questions or my responses; skipped most of the questions where I had to write out an answer, etc.)*

2 NOT VERY SERIOUSLY *(i.e., Answered most of the questions in a cursory way.)*

3 SOMEWHAT SERIOUSLY *(i.e., Made a "good faith" effort to complete the questionnaire in full, but didn't dwell on the questions, my responses, or my writing goals.)*

4 VERY SERIOUSLY *(i.e., Viewed the questionnaire as an opportunity to increase the value of this class for me; fully considered the questions and my responses; answered all questions; thought seriously about my writing goals, etc.)*

Comments? _____

Q6. While filling out the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire and/or later in the term, the questionnaire served as a(n): (*Indicate Yes, No, or Maybe for each listed response.*)

		YES	NO	Don't Know
a.	Tool for thinking about my writing skills	1	2	3
b.	Goal-setting tool for writing skills improvement	1	2	3
c.	Information source for my instructor	1	2	3
d.	Information source for WIC researcher	1	2	3
e.	Prompt for class discussions about writing issues	1	2	3
f.	Other uses not specified here?	1	2	3
	(Please specify) _____			

Q7. During the term, the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire served to increase my:

		YES	NO	Don't Know
a.	Understanding of WIC course requirements	1	2	3
b.	Awareness of my writing strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3
c.	Motivation to improve my writing skills	1	2	3
d.	Engagement with the writing assignments in this course	1	2	3
e.	Success in completing the course writing assignments	1	2	3

Q8. Further, as a learning tool, the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire contributed to my:

		YES	NO	Don't Know
a.	Success in learning the subject matter in this course	1	2	3
b.	Overall success in this WIC class	1	2	3
c.	Perception of my instructor as an ally in accomplishing course outcomes and goals	1	2	3
f.	Awareness of connections between my efforts in this WIC class and my future career success	1	2	3
d.	Other survey benefits not listed here	1	2	3
	(Please specify) _____			

Q9. Do you have your Start-of-Term Questionnaire in hand right now for review purposes, or have you reviewed it prior to filling out this self-evaluation?

1 NO   2 YES

Q9a. If *YES*, has this review been helpful for reflecting on your experience in this class?

1 NO   2 YES   3 Don't Know

PART TWO—DISCIPLINE-RELATED WRITING SKILLS

For each statement in this section, please circle the number of the item that most closely matches your self-evaluative response to the statement.

Q10. I would rate my discipline-related writing skills at the <u>beginning</u> and <u>end</u> of this course   as follows:

Q10a. Writing skills at <u>beginning</u> of course:

Needing much improvement		Somewhat skilled, but needing improvement		Highly skilled, little need for improvement
1	2	3	4	5

Q10b. Writing skills at <u>end</u> of course:

Still needing much improvement		More skilled, but still needing improvement		Highly skilled, little need for improvement
1	2	3	4	5

Q11. I have put a great deal of effort toward improving my <u>writing skills</u> in this WIC class.

1   Strongly agree
2   Somewhat agree
3   Somewhat disagree
4   Strongly disagree

Q12. My <u>discipline-related writing skills</u> have improved as a result of completing the writing assignments in this course.

1   Strongly agree
2   Somewhat agree
3   Somewhat disagree
4   Strongly disagree

Q13. During this course, my <u>revising skills</u> have improved.

1   Strongly agree
2   Somewhat agree
3   Somewhat disagree
4   Strongly disagree

Q14. My <u>skills as a peer reviewer</u> have improved during this course.

1   Strongly agree
2   Somewhat agree
3   Somewhat disagree
4   Strongly disagree
5   NA (No peer review done)

Q15. The <u>quality of peer review</u> I received in this class was better than my usual experience.

1   Strongly agree
2   Somewhat agree
3   Somewhat disagree
4   Strongly disagree
5   NA (No peer review done)

Q16. During this course, my <u>writing skills</u> have improved in these areas:
For each item, indicate YES or NO, or N/A (Didn't occur in this course)

Have skills improved?	YES	NO	N/A
a. Devising workable paper topics and thesis statements	1	2	3
b. Locating sources through library and/or Web-based research	1	2	3
c. Organizing information; establishing a smooth and logical flow of ideas	1	2	3
d. Generating a first draft..	1	2	3
e. Writing introductions and/or conclusions	1	2	3
f. Sticking to the topic; writing concisely; leaving out extraneous information...	1	2	3
g. Creating smooth transitions between paragraphs and sections	1	2	3
h. Incorporating and citing tables and figures	1	2	3
i. Incorporating and citing referenced information..	1	2	3
k. Identifying and correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors in my writing..	1	2	3
l. Using an appropriate tone and style for the intended audience	1	2	3
m. Following writing assignment specifications for format, length, style, audience, etc.	1	2	3
n. Time management in writing projects: Establishing and maintaining project schedules that allow me to produce the best papers I can	1	2	3
o. Other areas of writing improvement?...	1	2	3

(Please specify) _____

Q17. I have made significant progress towards meeting one or more of the <u>writing-related course outcomes/objectives listed on the course syllabus</u>.

    1   Strongly agree
    2   Somewhat agree
    3   Somewhat disagree
    4   Strongly disagree
    5   DON'T RECALL the writing outcomes/objectives that were listed on syllabus
    6   NA *(My course syllabus listed no writing-related outcomes or objectives)*

Q18. I have made significant progress towards meeting one or more <u>writing goals that I set for myself</u> at the beginning of this course.

    1   Strongly agree
    2   Somewhat agree
    3   Somewhat disagree
    4   Strongly disagree
    5   DON'T RECALL the writing goals that I set for myself
    6   NA *(I set no personal writing goals)*

Q19. As a result of taking this course, I have more <u>confidence in myself as a writer</u>.

    1   Strongly agree
    2   Somewhat agree
    3   Somewhat disagree
    4   Strongly disagree

Q20. During this course, the following activities helped me <u>improve my writing</u>:
For each item, indicate YES, NO, or N/A (Didn't occur in this course)

Helped improve my writing?	YES	NO	N/A
a. Getting feedback from my professor	1	2	3
b. Getting feedback from my peers	1	2	3
c. Revising one or more writing assignments	1	2	3
d. Reading assigned materials	1	2	3
e. Going to the Writing Center	1	2	3
f. In-class writing presentation by Writing Center director or other expert	1	2	3
g. Working on collaborative writing projects with peers	1	2	3
h. Participating in classroom discussions	1	2	3
i. Completing the writing assignments	1	2	3
j. Conferencing with my professor	1	2	3
k. Receiving information (evaluation criteria) on how assignments would be graded	1	2	3
l. Scheduling and devoting adequate time to my writing projects	1	2	3
m. Using the department's Writing Guide	1	2	3
n. Other	1	2	3
(Please specify) _____			

PART THREE—LEARNING COURSE CONTENT

For each statement in this section, please circle the number of the item that most closely matches your self-evaluative response to the statement.

Q21. I have put a great deal of effort toward <u>learning the subject matter</u> of this course.

1 Strongly agree
2 Somewhat agree
3 Somewhat disagree
4 Strongly disagree

Q22. I have made significant progress towards meeting one or more of the subject-matter learning outcomes/objectives <u>listed on the course syllabus</u>.

1 Strongly agree
2 Somewhat agree
3 Somewhat disagree
4 Strongly disagree
5 DON'T RECALL the learning outcomes/objectives that were listed on the syllabus
6 NA *(My course syllabus listed no learning outcomes)*

Q23. I have made significant progress towards meeting one or more subject-matter learning goals <u>that I set for myself</u> during this course.

1 Strongly agree
2 Somewhat agree
3 Somewhat disagree
4 Strongly disagree
5 DON'T RECALL the subject-matter learning goals that I set for myself
6 NA *(I set no personal learning goals)*

Q24. **The following activities helped me learn the subject matter of this course:**
For each item, indicate YES, NO, or N/A (Didn't occur in this course)

Helped me learn course subject matter?	YES	NO	N/A
a. Completing the formal, graded writing assignments for this class	1	2	3
b. Completing the informal writing-to-learn/critical-thinking assignments	1	2	3
c. Reading assigned materials...	1	2	3
d. Working on collaborative projects with other students	1	2	3
e. Participating in classroom discussions	1	2	3
f. Studying with other students outside of class..	1	2	3
g. Conferencing with the instructor	1	2	3
h. Other...	1	2	3

(Please specify) _____

Q25. **In this WIC class, I have gained experience with informal writing strategies that help me synthesize and think critically about the subject matter of this discipline.**

1 Strongly agree
2 Somewhat agree
3 Somewhat disagree
4 Strongly disagree

Q25a. What informal writing strategies have you practiced in this class?
_____

Q26. **My repertoire of discipline- and/or career-related writing skills has expanded by taking this class.**

1 Strongly agree
2 Somewhat agree
3 Somewhat disagree
4 Strongly disagree

Q26a. What new discipline-/career-related writing skills have you acquired in this class?
_____

Q27. **As a result of taking this course, I have more confidence in myself as a future professional in my intended career field.**

1 Strongly agree
2 Somewhat agree
3 Somewhat disagree
4 Strongly disagree
5 NA *(This course isn't related to my intended career field, or I don't know what that field is.)*

Q28. **Please use this space for additional comments** about this WIC course, WIC courses in general, the Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire, and/or this writing self-evaluation. **Thank you for completing this evaluation.**

Appendix C:
Oregon Department of Education Writing Scoring Guide,
High School Level, 2003–04

STUDENT SCORING GUIDE 2003-2004
WRITING, CIM

IDEAS AND CONTENT

-- Communicating knowledge of the topic, including relevant examples, facts, anecdotes and details --

6 The writing is exceptionally clear, focused, and interesting. It holds the reader's attention throughout. Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details suitable to audience and purpose. The writing has

- clarity, focus, and control.
- main idea(s) that stand out.
- supporting, relevant, carefully selected details; when appropriate, use of resources provides strong, accurate, credible support.
- a thorough, balanced, in-depth explanation or exploration of the topic; the writing makes connections and shares insights.
- content and selected details that are well-suited to audience and purpose.

5 The writing is clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Main ideas stand out and are developed by supporting details that fit the audience and purpose. The writing has

- clarity, focus, and control.
- main idea(s) that stand out.
- supporting, relevant, carefully selected details; when appropriate, use of resources provides strong, accurate, credible support.
- a thorough, balanced explanation or exploration of the topic; the writing makes connections and shares insights.
- content and selected details that are well-suited to audience and purpose.

4 The writing is clear and focused. The reader can easily understand the main ideas. Support is present, although it may be limited or rather general. The writing has

- an easily identifiable purpose.
- clear main idea(s).
- supporting details that are relevant but may be overly general or limited in places; when appropriate, resources are used to provide accurate support.
- a topic that is explored/explained, although developmental details may occasionally be out of balance with the main idea(s); some connections and insights may be present.
- content and selected details that are relevant, but not always well-chosen for audience and purpose.

3 The reader can understand the main ideas, but they may be overly broad or simplistic. Supporting detail is often limited, overly general, or sometimes strays off the topic. The writing has

- an easily identifiable purpose and main idea(s).
- predictable or overly-obvious main ideas or plot; conclusions or main points seem to be the kind we've heard many times before.
- support is attempted, but details are limited in scope or quantity, out of balance with too much or too little for particular points, somewhat off topic, predictable, or overly general.
- details that may not be based on credible resources; they may be based on clichés, stereotypes, or questionable sources of information.
- difficulties when moving from general observations to specifics.

2 Main ideas and purpose are somewhat unclear or development is attempted but minimal. The paper has

- an unclear purpose that requires the reader to guess the main ideas.
- minimal development; insufficient details.
- irrelevant details that are off topic and clutter the paper.
- extensive repetition of detail.

1 The writing lacks a central idea or purpose. The writing has

- ideas that are extremely limited or unclear.
- minimal or non-existent development; the paper is too short to demonstrate the development of an idea.

ORGANIZATION

-- Structuring information in logical sequence, making connections and transitions among ideas, sentences and paragraphs --

6 The organization helps to communicate the central idea(s) and its development. The order and structure are compelling and move the reader through the text easily. The writing has

- effective or creative sequencing; the organizational structure fits the topic, and the writing is easy to follow.
- a strong, inviting beginning that draws the reader in and a strong, satisfying sense of resolution or closure.
- smooth, effective transitions among all elements (sentence, paragraphs, ideas).
- details that fit where placed.

5 The organization helps to communicate the central idea(s) and its development. The order and structure are strong and move the reader through the text. The writing has

- effective sequencing; the organizational structure fits the topic, and the writing is easy to follow.
- an inviting beginning that draws the reader in and a satisfying sense of resolution or closing.
- smooth, effective transitions among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, ideas).
- details that fit where placed.

4 Organization is clear and consistent. Order and structure are present, but may be too obvious. The writing has

- clear sequencing.
- an organization that may be predictable.
- a developed beginning that may not be particularly inviting; a developed conclusion that may lack subtlety.
- a body that is easy to follow with details that fit where placed.
- transitions that may be stilted or predictable.
- an organization which helps the reader, despite some weaknesses.

3 An attempt at organization has been made, but it is inconsistent, ineffective or too obvious. The writing has

- attempts at sequencing, but the order or the relationship among ideas is sometimes unclear.
- a beginning and an ending which are probably there, but which are either undeveloped (too short) or too obvious (e.g., "My topic is..."; "These are all the reasons that...").
- overuse of the same few transitional devices (e.g., "and," "then," "but,", "so," "or," "for," "yet," numbering).
- a structure that is too tight, almost like a formula.
- placement of details that is sometimes confusing.
- an organization that helps the reader in some places, but breaks down in others.

2 The writing lacks a clear organizational structure. The writing is either difficult to follow and the reader has to reread substantial portions, or the piece is simply too short to demonstrate organizational skills. The writing has

- some attempts at sequencing, but the order or the relationship among ideas is frequently unclear.
- a missing or extremely undeveloped beginning, body, or ending.
- a lack of transitions, or when present, ineffective or overused transitions.
- details that seem to be randomly placed, leaving the reader frequently confused.

1 The writing doesn't hold together. Even after rereading, the reader remains confused. The writing has

- a lack of effective sequencing.
- a failure to provide a beginning and/or ending.
- a lack of transitions.
- problems with pacing; the reader feels either bogged down in trivia or rushed along too rapidly.

VOICE

--Expressing ideas in an engaging and credible way for audience and purpose --

6 The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. The writer seems deeply committed to the topic, and there is an exceptional sense of "writing to read." The writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing has

- an effective level of closeness to or distance from the audience (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice, while an expository piece may have a more academic voice; nevertheless, both should be engaging lively, or interesting. Technical writing may require greater distance.)
- an exceptionally strong sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader and of how to communicate the message most effectively.
- a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, the writing may show originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, or suspense.

5 The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. The writer seems committed to the topic. The writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing has

- an appropriate level of closeness to or distance from the audience (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice, while an expository piece may require a more academic voice; both should be engaging, lively, or interesting. Technical writing may require greater distance.)
- a strong sense of audience.
- a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, the writing shows originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, or suspense.

4 A voice is present. The writer demonstrates commitment to the topic. In places, the writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing has

- an inconsistent level of closeness to or distance from the audience.
- a sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader but has not consistently employed an appropriate voice.
- liveliness, sincerity, or humor, however, at times the writer may be either inappropriately casual or personal, or inappropriately formal and stiff.

3 The writer's commitment to the topic seems limited. The writer may use a voice that is either inappropriately personal or inappropriately impersonal. The writing has

- no apparent matching of voice to topic, purpose, and audience.
- a limited sense of audience.
- an occasional sense of the writer behind the words; however, the voice may shift or disappear a line or two later.
- limited ability to shift to a more objective voice when necessary.

2 The writing provides little sense of involvement or commitment. There is no evidence that the writer has chosen a suitable voice. The writing has

- a lack of audience awareness; there is little sense of "writing to read."
- little or no hint of the writer behind the words. There is rarely a sense of interaction between the reader and writer.
- a voice that is likely to be overly formal and personal.

1 The writing seems to lack a sense of involvement or commitment. The writing has

- no engagement of the writer; the writing is flat, lifeless, stiff, or mechanical.
- a lack of audience awareness.
- no hint of the writer behind the words, with little sense of interaction between writer and reader; the writing does not involve or engage the reader when it should.

WORD CHOICE

Selecting functional, precise and descriptive words appropriate for audience and purpose

6 Words convey the intended message in an exceptionally interesting, precise, and natural way. The writer employs a rich, broad range of words which have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed for impact. The writing has

- accurate strong, specific words; powerful words energize the writing.
- fresh, original expression; slang, if used, seems purposeful and is effective.
- vocabulary that is striking and varied, but that is natural an d not overdone.
- ordinary words used in an unusual way.
- words that evoke strong images; figurative language may be used.

5 Words communicate the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way. The writer uses a broad range of words that have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed. The writing has

- accurate, specific words; word choices seem to give energy to the writing.
- fresh, vivid expression; slang, if used, seems purposeful and is effective.
- vocabulary that may be striking and varied, but that is natural and not overdone.
- ordinary words used in an unusual way.
- words that evoke clear images; figurative language may be used.

4 Words effectively convey the intended message. The writer employs a variety of words that are functional. The writing has

- words that work but do not add energy to the writing.
- expression that is functional; however, slang, if used, does not seem purposeful and is not particularly effective.
- attempts at expressive language that may occasionally seem overdone.
- overuse or inappropriate use of technical language or jargon, considering audience and purpose.
- rare experiments with language; however, the writing may have some fine moments and generally avoids clichés.

3 Language is ordinary, lacking interest, precision, and variety. The writer does not use a variety of words, producing a sort of "generic" paper filled with familiar words and phrases. Word choices may be inappropriately technical. The writing has

- words that work, but that rarely capture the reader's interest.
- expression that seems ordinary and general; slang, if used, is not purposeful or effective.
- words that are accurate for the most part, although misused words may sometimes appear.
- attempts at colorful language that are overdone.
- reliance on clichés and overused expressions.
- overuse or inappropriate use of technical jargon, considering audience and purpose.

2 Language is dull or misused, detracting from the meaning and impact. The writing has

- words that are colorless, flat or imprecise.
- repetition or overwhelming reliance on worn expressions that repeatedly detract from the message.
- images that are fuzzy or absent altogether.

1 The writing shows a limited vocabulary, or is so filled with misuses of words that the meaning is unclear. Only the most general kind of message is communicated because of vague or general language. The writing has

- general, vague words that fail to communicate.
- an extremely limited range of words.
- words that simply do not fit; they seem imprecise, inadequate, or just plain wrong.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

--Developing flow and rhythm of sentences--

6 The writing has an effective flow and rhythm. Sentences show a high degree of craftsmanship, with consistently strong and varied structure. Expressive oral reading is easy and enjoyable. The writing has

- a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing effortlessly into the next.
- extensive variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text.
- sentence structure that helps meaning by drawing attention to key ideas.
- varied sentence patterns that create an effective combination of power and grace.
- strong control over sentence structure; fragments, if used at all, work well.
- control of style; dialogue, if used, sounds natural.

5 The writing has an easy flow and rhythm. Sentences are carefully crafted, with strong and varied structure. Expressive oral reading is easy. The writing has

- a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing into the next.
- variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text.
- sentence structure that helps meaning.
- control over sentence structure; fragments, if used at all, work well.
- control of style; dialogue, if used, sounds natural.

4 The writing flows; however, connections between phrases or sentences may be mechanical. Sentence patterns are somewhat varied, contributing to ease in oral reading. The writing has

- a natural sound; the reader can move easily through the piece, although it may lack rhythm and grace.
- some repeated patterns of sentence structure, length, and beginnings that detract somewhat from overall impact.
- strong control over simple sentence structures, but variable control over more complex sentences; fragments, if present, are usually effective.
- occasional lapses in control of style; dialogue, if used, sounds natural for the most part, but may at times sound stilted or unnatural.

3 The writing tends to be mechanical rather than fluid. Occasional awkward constructions force the reader to slow down or reread. The writing has

- some passages that invite fluid oral reading, but others that are choppy.
- some variety in sentence structure, length, and beginnings, although the writer falls into repetitive sentence patterns.
- good control over simple sentence structures, but little control over more complex sentences; fragments, if present, may not be effective.
- sentences which, although functional, lack energy.
- lapses in control of style; dialogue, if used, may sound stilted or unnatural.

2 The writing tends to be either choppy or rambling. Awkward constructions often force the reader to slow down or reread. The writing has

- significant portions of the text that are difficult to follow or read aloud.
- sentence patterns that are overly repetitive (e.g., subject-verb or subject-verb-object).
- sentence structure that helps meaning.
- a significant number of awkward, choppy, or rambling constructions.

1 The writing is difficult to follow or to read aloud. Sentences tend to be choppy, incomplete, rambling, or just very awkward. The writing has

- text that does not invite—and may not even permit—smooth oral reading.
- confusing word order that often makes the meaning unclear.
- sentence structure that frequently makes meaning unclear.
- sentences that are fragmented, confusing, choppy, or rambling.

CONVENTIONS

Demonstrating knowledge of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, paragraphing

6 The writing demonstrates strong control of standard conventions and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Errors are so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them. The writing has

- strong control of conventions; unusual usage of conventions may occur for stylistic effect.
- strong, effective use of punctuation that guides the reader through the text.
- correct spelling, even of more difficult words.
- paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure.
- skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece.
- little or no need for editing.

5 The writing demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions which effectively contribute to clear communication. Errors are so few and so minor that they do not interfere with readability. The writing has

- correct grammar and usage.
- sound paragraphing.
- effective use of punctuation.
- correct spelling, even of difficult words.
- few capitalization errors.
- skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece.
- little need for editing.

4 The writing demonstrates control of standard writing conventions. Minor errors, while perhaps noticeable, do not impede readability. The writing has

- control over conventions used, although a wide range is not demonstrated.
- correct end-of-sentence punctuation; internal punctuation may sometimes be incorrect.
- spelling that is usually correct, especially on common words.
- basically sound paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure.
- correct capitalization; errors, if any, are minor.
- occasional lapses in correct grammar and usage; problems are not severe enough to distort meaning or confuse the reader.
- moderate need for editing.

3 The writing shows limited control of standard conventions. Errors begin to interfere with readability. The writing has

- errors in grammar, usage, and capitalization that do not block meaning but do distract the reader.
- paragraphs that sometimes run together or begin at ineffective points.
- end-of-sentence punctuation that is usually correct, but internal punctuation that contains frequent errors.
- spelling errors that distract the reader; misspelling of common words sometimes occurs.
- some control over basic conventions, but the text is too simple or too short to reveal mastery.
- significant need for editing.

2 The writing demonstrates little control of standard writing conventions. Frequent, significant errors impede readability. The writing has

- little control over basic conventions.
- many end-of-sentence punctuation errors; internal punctuation contains frequent errors.
- spelling errors that frequently distract the reader; misspelling of common words often occurs.
- paragraphs that often run together or begin in ineffective places.
- capitalization that is inconsistent or often incorrect.
- errors in grammar and usage that interfere with readability and meaning.
- substantial need for editing.

1 Numerous errors in conventions repeatedly distract the reader and make the writing difficult to read. The writing has

- very limited skill in using conventions.
- punctuation (including ends of sentences) that tends to be omitted, haphazard, or incorrect.
- frequent spelling errors that significantly interfere with readability.
- paragraphing that may be irregular or absent.
- capitalization that appears to be random.
- a need for extensive editing.

CITING SOURCES (Use only on classroom assignments requiring research)

Indicating the sources of information presented, including all ideas, statements, quotes and statistics that are taken from sources and that are not common knowledge

6 The writing demonstrates exceptionally strong commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source. The writer has

- acknowledged borrowed material by introducing the quotation or paraphrase with the name of the authority.
- punctuated all quoted materials; errors, if any, are minor.
- paraphrased material by rewriting it using writer's style and language.
- provided specific in-text documentation for each borrowed item.
- provided a bibliography page listing every source cited in the paper; omitted sources that were consulted but not used.

5 The writing demonstrates a strong commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source. Errors are so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them. The writer has

- acknowledged borrowed material by introducing the quotation or paraphrase with the name of the authority; key phrases are directly quoted so as to give full credit where credit is due.
- punctuated all quoted materials; errors are minor.
- paraphrased material by rewriting using writer's style and language.
- provided specific in-text documentation for borrowed material.
- provided a bibliography page listing every source cited in the paper; omitted sources that were consulted but not used.

4 The writing demonstrates a commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source. Minor errors, while perhaps noticeable, do not blatantly violate the rules of documentation. The writer has

- acknowledged borrowed material by sometimes introducing the quotation or paraphrase with the name of the authority.
- punctuated all quoted materials; errors, while noticeable, do not impede understanding.
- paraphrased material by rewriting using writer's style and language.
- provided in-text documentation for most borrowed material.
- provided a bibliography page listing every source cited in the paper; included sources that were consulted but not used.

3 The writing demonstrates a limited commitment The writing demonstrates a limited commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is sometimes used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source. Errors begin to violate the rules of documentation. The writer has

- enclosed quoted materials within quotation marks; however, incorrectly used commas, colons, semicolons, question marks or exclamation marks that are part of the quoted material.
- included paraphrased material that is not properly documented.
- paraphrased material by simply rearranging sentence patterns.

Chart continued on next page ...

2	The writing demonstrates little commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Frequent errors in documentation result in instances of plagiarism and often do not enable the reader to check the source. The writer has	1	The writing demonstrates disregard for the conventions of research writing. Lack of proper documentation result in plagiarism and do not enable the reader to check the source. The writer has
	• enclosed quoted materials within quotation marks; however, incorrectly used commas, colons, semicolons, question marks or exclamation marks that are part of the quoted material. • attempted paraphrasing but included words that should be enclosed by quotation marks or rephrased into the writer's language and style. • altered the essential ideas of the source. • included citations that incorrectly identify reference sources.		• borrowed abundantly from an original source, even to the point of retaining the essential wording. • no citations that credit source material. • included words or ideas from a source without providing quotation marks. • included no bibliography page listing sources that were used.

Appendix D:
Instructor STQ Debriefing Questionnaire Used for Pilot Study

Instructor Debriefing Questions *re.* Experience with the "Start-Of-Term Writing Questionnaire for WIC Students"

Instructor: _____

Course name and number: _____

Q1. **Total number of students in your class?** (info helpful for determining survey rates of return)

    1   @ Beginning of term _____
    2   @ End of term _____

Q2. **Approx. percentages (or actual numbers) of students by class standing?**

    1   Grad/post bac students _____
    2   Seniors _____
    3   Juniors _____
    4   Sophomores/Freshmen _____

Q3. **Approx. percentage of students for whom this WIC course counted for their major?**

Q4. **Briefly describe the predominant learning styles and behaviors that you observed in your WIC classroom.** (For example, were your students participatory constructors or more passive receivers of knowledge? Did they show preferences for visual, aural, textual, or kinesthetic presentation of information? Are they kinesthetic learners who prefer "learning by doing" vs. "learning by reading or hearing about"?

Q5. **Which of these two cognitive orientations would you ascribe to the majority of your students?**

    1   Associative, non-sequential thinkers; learning involves taking detours, exploring and integrating "side-issues" as part of their movement toward their named goals .
    2   Logical/linear thinkers; learning is a relatively straight-line process of naming and completing named goals, one at a time. ("Listmakers")
    3   50/50f

➦ *Before responding to the questions below, please briefly review the student start-of-term student writing questionnaire (STQ) that you administered at the beginning of winter term.*

Q6. **During which class meeting did you distribute the start-of-term questionnaire (STQ)?**

    1   First time the class met
    2   Second class meeting
    3   Third class meeting
    4   Other   _____

Q7. **How did you distribute the STQ?**

    1   Passed it out in class
    2   Left it up front for students to optionally pick up on their way out of class
    3   Other method (please specify) _____

Q8. Where did your students complete the STQ?
1   In class
2   As a take-home activity

Q9. Did you make the STQ available to students who weren't in class the day you distributed it?
1   No
2   Yes

Q10. In a few words, how would you characterize your students' response to being asked to take the STQ (e.g. interested, willing, resistant, bored, neutral, etc.—or some combination)?

Q11. When you administered the STQ, what were your intentions for its use? (Mark all that apply)
a.   As information for researcher
b.   As information for me about my students
c.   As a way to gauge whether my students' writing- and/or content-related expectations for this course coincided with my own views
d.   As an opportunity for students to reflect on their writing skills and to set some writing/learning goals
e.   Other (please describe) _____

Q12. When you presented the STQ to your students, did you verbalize personal interest in their responses (as a way for you to learn about your students as writers), as opposed to presenting the questionnaire solely as a WIC/thesis research tool?
1   Yes, verbalized strong interest in students' responses
2   Mentioned but did not emphasize my interest
3   No, didn't mention that I was interested in the results

Q13. When presenting the STQ to your students, did you discuss its potential use as a personal tool (for them) for optimizing their learning and writing skills improvement during the course?
1   Yes, emphasized this function
2   Mentioned but did not emphasize this function of the survey
3   Didn't mention this function of the survey

Q14. What procedure did you use for collecting the STQ?

Q15. Did you review the survey responses before forwarding them to the WIC researcher?
1   No
2   Yes, skimmed them
3   Yes, read through them thoroughly

Q16. Did you review the "compiled survey results" forwarded to you by the WIC researcher?
1   No
2   Yes
3   Did not receive a set of compiled results

Q17. Which, if any, of the following STQ topic areas yielded information helpful for getting to know your students? (Mark all that apply)
a.   Students' perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses as writers
b.   Students' expectations of whether/how taking this course would help their writing
c.   Other college-level writing courses taken by students
d.   Students' career goals

e. Students' beliefs about the textual genres they'd be using and the characteristics of good writing in their specified career
f. Students' assessment of their research paper writing skills
g. Students' experience with revision
h. Students' opinions about peer review
i. Students' familiarity (or lack thereof) with the concept of writing-to-learn
j. Students' individual writing goals
k. Other (please specify) _____

Q18. In these same areas, did any of your students' collective responses surprise you?
a. Students' perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses as writers
b. Students' expectations of how (and if) taking this course would help their writing
c. Other college-level writing courses taken by students
d. Students' career goals
e. Students' perceptions of writing in their specified career
f. Students' assessment of their research paper writing skills
g. Students' experience with revision
h. Students' opinions about peer review
i. Students' familiarity (or lack thereof) with the concept of writing-to-learn
j. Students' individual writing goals
k. Other (please specify) _____

Q19. In which of the following areas was your teaching influenced by students' STQ responses? (For any items you check, please briefly describe the adjustments you made.)
a. Lecture content _____
b. Reading assignments _____
c. Formal writing assignments _____
d. Informal writing assignments _____
e. Strategies for responding to student writing
    a. (in conference and/or on written assignments) _____
f. Survey did not influence my teaching

Q20. How frequently did you refer to the questionnaire and student responses in class, as part of your teaching?
1 Never
2 1-2 times
3 3 or more times

Q20a. If you did refer to the STQ responses in class, in what situation(s) did you do so?

Q21. The text on the last page of the STQ, where students wrote down their personal writing goals, recommended that students also write down their goals on their course syllabus. Were you aware of this instruction?
1 Yes
2 No

Q21a. If you were aware of this recommendation, did you reiterate it to your students?
1 Yes
2 No

Q22. The start of term writing questionnaire was designed as an optional and customizable tool for use in WIC courses. Would you consider using this STQ again in a future WIC class?

    1   No
    2   Yes, definitely
    3   Possibly

➲ *If you answered " Yes, definitely" or "Possibly" to Q22, please continue to Q23. Otherwise, thank you for participating in this interview.*

Q23. How would you expect to use the STQ in future classes? (Mark all that apply)

    a.   As information for me about my students
    b.   As a way to gauge whether my students' writing- and/or content-related expectations for this course coincide with my own views
    c.   As an opportunity for students to reflect on their current writing skills and/or on writing in their intended careers
    d.   As a personal goal- or outcome-setting tool
    e.   Other (please describe) _____

Q24. If you choose to administer this in the future as a class assignment, there will be no need to adhere to the "human subjects research" anonymity requirement. In light of your response(s) to Q23, what for you would be the optimal approach to administering and collecting the survey? (For a—c, please circle one item in each pair.)

    a.   Completion required   *or*   Optional completion?
    b.   With ID   *or*   Anonymous?
    c.   In-class exercise   *or*   Take-home assignment?

Q25. What type of verbal instruction/coaching/encouragement, if any, would you provide when administering the survey?

Q26. Considering your responses to Q23, what kind(s) of survey follow-up might you use during the term? For example,

    a.   Whole-class discussion of "problem areas" indicated by students
    b.   Individual conference discussion/consultation on student responses
    c.   Recommend print or online resources that support students' indicated problem areas
    d.   Modify or add to existing assignments to support students' indicated problem areas
    e.   Ask students to develop plan for meeting personal goals
    f.   Periodically ask students to reflect on their progress in meeting their personal goals
    g.   Use students' responses to "intended career" questions as material for class discussions and/or arranging presentations by others on writing in your discipline
    h.   Other possible follow-up uses? (Please describe)
       _____

Q27. My purpose in designing this survey is to provide a customizable tool for WIC instructors. If you were to use this in the future, what kinds of changes would you make to the survey so that it would better serve the discipline-specific needs of you and your students?

Q28. **If you think that the "personal writing goal-setting" activity is an important component of the STQ, what additional steps might you take to emphasize this component and to reinforce students' efforts to achieve their goals?** (in terms of accountability, guidance in planning goal achievement strategies, other ways of showing interest and providing encouragement, etc.)

Q29. **As well as being a tool for individual instructors, do you think the STQ results could be helpful at the departmental level, in naming and helping students achieve departmental communications outcomes?**

Q30. **Did the end-of-term student writing evaluation (ETQ) provide useful course evaluation information?**

Q31. **As well as being an information source for individual instructors, do you think the ETQ results could be helpful, at the departmental level, in assessing upper-division students' awareness and achievement of departmental communications outcomes?**

Appendix E:
Sample of Student Responses to Five Open-ended STQ Questions

Table E-1 presents a sampling of students responses to some of the open-ended STQ questions: the ways respondents expected their writing to improve (Question 7), two writing strengths and weaknesses (Questions 8 and 9), three characteristics of good writing in respondents' intended career field (Question 13), and two personal writing goals for the WI course (Question 25). The responses were copied verbatim from two randomly selected STQs from one participating WI section in each of the seven colleges involved in this study.

Table E-1. Sample STQ respondent records showing writing improvement expectations, writing strengths and weaknesses, characteristics of good writing in their field, and personal writing goals.

Respondent's College	Expectations for Writing Improvement	Writing Strengths	Writing Weaknesses	Qualities of Good Writing in Field	Personal Writing Goals
Engineering	Yes–Better technical writing & lab report writing skills	Varying sentence structure; Brevity	Spelling; Clarity	Concise; Organized—clear; Detail oriented	Learning to write technical papers & lab reports quickly, but still being detail oriented & clear; Learning how to write group papers so that all members participate & contribute to a great paper.
	Yes—Become more proficient & write with ease.	Organizing information; Including relavent information	Writing in a timely manner; Sentence structure/word use	Accurate; complete; To the point	Become more efficient & confident in my writing through instructor feedback & gained experience; Learn to write out complex thoughts prior to performing an experiment or writing something
Science	Yes—Learn the nuts and bolts of writing	Ability to revise; Open to criticism	Spelling; Concise statements	Clear; Concise; Interesting	Become a better speller; Learn better (more proper) grammar
	Yes—Organization, language	Voice; Tense	Clarity/organization; Appropriate language/vocabulary	Concise; Clear; Accurage	To write a more organized paper with clear thesis and smooth transitions; To formulate concise sentences with proper vocabulary
Business	Yes—Get more experience writing & feedback	Grammer; Focused	Spelling; Opening & closing paragraphs	Easy to comprehend; Creativity (stand out); Brief not long winded	Writing in a more professional manner; Improve my conclusions & opening paragraphs
	No—I'm older than average and have already done a substantial amount of business writing. I do expect to better understand the course material through the writing assignments however.	Experience; Vocabulary	Spelling; Grammer	Understanding audience; Proper use of vocabulary for audience; Grammer & spelling	Improve speed at which I complete writing assignments; Improve spelling, grammer and reduce the use of unecessary words.
Agricultural Science	Yes—Fluency, grammer	Express well in writting; Imaganative	Grammar; Write too much	Accuracy; Back up what saying (data); Informative	More able to work in a group; Not to be afraid to write*

*For the optional final "additional comments" question, this respondent wrote "I am very afraid of WIC courses, and peer review, I do not have confidence in my writting skills."

Table E-1 (Continued).

Respondent's College	Expectations for Writing Improvement	Writing Strengths	Writing Weaknesses	Qualities of Good Writing in Field	Personal Writing Goals
Agricultural Science	Yes—Become more clear on writing guidelines	Proper spelling; Proper grammer	Writing bibliography	Organized; Interesting; persuasive	Refamiliarize self w/writing rules and guidelines; Improve research skills
Health and Human Sciences	No—My writing never improves	Write quickly; Good ideas	Can't spell; Bad grammar	[Intended career not known]	Have enough info to make my paper long enough; Make smooth transitions between ideas
	Don't know	Organization; Word choice	Writing in a passive voice	Organized, clear piece; Word choice appropriate for specific reader; No added "fluff" filler or junk writing	Be a more confident writer; Make revisions & more peer editing
Liberal Arts	No— A 3-page paper as the hardest assignment is hardly challenging, as apposed to 15 pg. term paper in other classes I have taken.	I am creative in word usage and flow; Can argue my point well	Tend to be less organized than others; Lose my direction/point sometimes	Articulate; Interesting; Concise	Fit concise and appropriate information into a 3-4 page paper; Have an interesting product at the end of the assignment instead of a regular assigned paper
	Yes—Work on developing thesis	I am creative in how I get my point across; Spelling	Vocabulary; Structure	Neatness, exactness; Proper spelling/grammar; Creative writing (as an artist)	To enhance my vocabulary within my field...and use this vocabulary to better describe my subject and sound more proffesional; Create a smoother "voice" in my writing
Forestry	Yes—All	Understandable/clear; Use appropriate tone & writing style	Sticking to the topic; Writing intro & conclusion	Understandable/clear; Short & to the point; Accurate information	Incorporating & citing referenced info in text; Incorporating & citing tables and figures in text.
	Yes— By writing and recieving feedback you always improve	Diverse word choices; Avoid repedativeness	Run ons; Idea or paragraph breaks	Clear; Understandable; Proper format	Become better at creating better formats; To improve on transitions
Honors College	Don't know	Organization; Grammar	Creativity; Tone	Clarity; Precision; Brevity	Become more confident; Avoid procrastination
	Yes—Analyzing films	Clarity; Organization	Ought to be more varity of vocab.; Terse	Clarity; Organization; Timely	Quickness; Quality

Appendix F:
Example of Customized STQ and Follow-up Materials
Used in a Two-Term Mechanical Engineering WI Course

- **Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire**
- **ME 418 End-of-Term Writing Self-Assessment**
- **ME 418/19 End-Of-Course Writing-Process Memo**

ME 418/419—Senior Design

Name: _____

Start-of-Term Writing Questionnaire
for OSU WIC Students

PURPOSE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

All Writing-Intensive Curriculum (WIC) courses at OSU share the following characteristics:

- ✓ *They are upper-division courses in which students write a minimum of 5,000 words, written work comprises at least 30% of students' grades, and writing is a major tool for learning course content.*

- ✓ *They focus on the kinds of writing done by professionals in related career fields.*

- ✓ *They include a researched and documented formal writing assignment.*

- ✓ *They include at least one assignment in which students revise and polish their drafts based on peer and/or instructor review. (Revisions count toward the 5,000 word course minimum.)*

- ✓ *They use informal writing activities to help students learn and think critically about course content.*

By asking you questions related to the items listed above, this questionnaire can help you clarify your writing expectations and intentions for this WIC course. Your responses will also assist you in identifying two personal writing goals for this course.

Additionally, the information you provide as a class may assist your instructor and department in helping you—and students in future classes—achieve your collective academic and professional goals.

Thank you for your investment of time and thought in completing this questionnaire.

SECTION 1—COLLEGE WRITING EXPERIENCE AND CURRENT WRITING SKILLS

Q1. In the table below, please first indicate whether or not you have completed each of the following college-level writing courses either here at OSU or anywhere else. Then, for those you have taken, please indicate where. *(First indicate YES or NO; if YES, indicate where.)*

		Have taken?			**Where?**		
		NO	YES	OSU	OTHER 4–YEAR COLLEGE	COMMUNITY COLLEGE	PRE-COLLEGE COURSE
a.	First-Year/Freshman Composition (WR 121)	1	2 ⟶	1	2	3	4
b.	Business Writing (WR 214)	1	2 ⟶	1	2	3	NA
c.	Technical Writing (WR 327)....	1	2 ⟶	1	2	3	NA
d.	Other—*List course name(s) and location(s)* _____						

Q2. Which of the following*, in your opinion*, best describes your current writing skills compared to most other upper-level OSU students in your major or graduate program? (*Circle one number.*)

     1   Much stronger than most others
     2   Somewhat stronger than most others
     3   About the same as most others
     4   Somewhat weaker than most others
     5   Much weaker than most others

Q3. Is this the first WIC course you have taken here at OSU?
    NOTE: WR 121, 214, and 327 are *not* WIC courses.

     1   YES
     2   NO ⟶   **Q3A. If NO, how many other OSU WIC courses have you taken?** ____

Q4. Do you expect to improve your writing skills as a result of taking this WIC course?

     1   YES ⟶ **Q4A. If YES, in what ways?** _____
     2   NO   ⟶ Q**4B. If NO, why not?** _____
     3   Don't know

Q5. Name two of your strengths as a writer:

     1. _____

     2. _____

Q6. Name two of your weaknesses as a writer:

     1. _____

     2. _____

SECTION 2— WRITING AND YOUR CAREER

Q7. Please list the career field in which you expect to seek employment after you complete your undergraduate degree (or after grad school, if you intend to pursue further studies.) If you have in mind a specific job position and/or employer, please list that information as well.

Intended career field: _____

Specific job position and/or employer, if known: _____

☐ *Check here if you do not know your career field, and go to **SECTION 3, Q14** now.*

Q8. In your opinion, how important are strong writing skills to success in the career field you listed in Q7? (*Circle one number.*)

   1   VERY IMPORTANT

   2   SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT

   3   NOT VERY IMPORTANT

Q9. List three characteristics of "good writing" in the career field you listed in Q7.

   a.   _____

   b.   _____

   c.   _____

Q10. Please indicate whether or not you expect to do each of the following kinds of writing in the career field listed above. *Indicate YES or NO by circling one number for each item. List any additional items in the "Other" option.*

Will your work include this kind of writing?	YES	NO
a. Correspondence via letters, memos, emails, etc.	1	2
b. Web page texts for Internet audiences	1	2
c. Technical reports or briefs	1	2
d. Process documentation (lab reports, instructional manuals, etc.)	1	2
e. Press releases	1	2
f. Journal articles or books	1	2
g. Advertising copy or marketing texts	1	2
h. Project or grant proposals	1	2
i. Other (*Please specify*) _____		

Q11. In your intended career, what fraction of a typical work day would you expect to spend on writing tasks?

   4   On a typical workday, I would expect to spend almost no time on writing tasks.
   5   On a typical workday, I would expect to spend no more than a quarter of my time on writing tasks.
   6   On a typical workday, I would likely spend about half of my time on writing tasks.

Q12. Other than letters, memos, and emails, how much of your workplace writing do you expect to do collaboratively (i.e., several writers will contribute to the final document)?

   1   Very little of my workplace writing will be done collaboratively.
   2   About half of my workplace writing will be done collaboratively.
   3   Most of my workplace writing will be done collaboratively.

Q13. What is your best guess as to the portion of your workplace writing that will undergo review by others in your organization, with the expectation that reviewers' feedback will be incorporated into the final document?

    4   LESS THAN 25%
    5   25-50 %
    6   MORE THAN 50%

SECTION 3—WRITING DOCUMENTED RESEARCH PAPERS

Q14. With which of these aspects of the research paper-writing process (in any field) do you typically experience problems? *For each item, indicate YES, NO, or Never Required (NR).*

	A problem for you?	YES	NO	Never Required
a.	Coming up with an appropriate and workable topic	1	2	NR
b.	Locating sources through library and/or Web-based research	1	2	NR
c.	Organizing the information and presenting it in a logical sequence	1	2	NR
d.	Generating the first draft of your paper	1	2	NR
e.	Writing the introduction and/or conclusion	1	2	NR
f.	Sticking to the topic; identifying and omitting extraneous information	1	2	NR
g.	Creating smooth transitions between paragraphs and sections	1	2	NR
h.	Incorporating and citing tables and figures in your text	1	2	NR
i.	Incorporating and citing referenced information in your text	1	2	NR
j.	Revising your draft after instructor, peer, and/or your own review	1	2	NR
k.	Finding and correcting grammar and spelling errors within your text	1	2	NR
l.	Using an appropriate tone and writing style for your intended audience	1	2	NR
m.	Following the assignment specifications for format, length, style, audience, etc.	1	2	NR
n.	Establishing and maintaining a research and writing schedule that gives you enough time to produce the best paper you can	1	2	NR

    o. Other (please specify) _____

SECTION 4—REVISING

Q15. If someone were to ask you *"What does 'revising a draft' mean?"*— what would you tell them?

Q16. In how many courses thus far <u>in your major</u> have you revised and re-submitted drafts of your papers following peer and/or instructor review?

    5   NEVER   ⟶   *If you answered NEVER, please go on to **SECTION 5, Q20** now.*
    6   1 course
    7   2-3 courses
    8   More than 3 courses

Q17. In courses in your major, how helpful have you found *PEER* feedback on your drafts?

1 VERY HELPFUL
2 SOMEWHAT HELPFUL
3 MOSTLY UNHELPFUL
4 ENTIRELY UNHELPFUL
5 NA (Never received peer feedback)

Q18. In courses in your major, how helpful have you found *INSTRUCTOR* feedback on your drafts?

1 VERY HELPFUL
2 SOMEWHAT HELPFUL
3 MOSTLY UNHELPFUL
4 ENTIRELY UNHELPFUL
5 NA (Never received instructor feedback)

Q19. Are there notable differences between the ways you use instructor feedback and peer feedback on your writing?

1 NO
2 YES ⟶ **Q19A. If YES, please describe these differences in the space below.**

SECTION 5—WRITING-TO-LEARN

Q20. Are you acquainted with the term "writing-to-learn"?

1 NO
2 YES ⟶ **Q20A. If YES, what is your understanding of this term?**

_____

Q21. Which, if any, of the following techniques have you found helpful for clarifying your thinking and learning information and concepts? *For each item, indicate YES, NO, or Never Tried (NT).*

Strategy Helpful?	YES	NO	Never Tried
a. Journal or notebook for reflection, problem-solving, record-keeping	1	2	NT
b. Freewriting or brainstorming to generate ideas and questions	1	2	NT
c. Using outlines or other idea-grouping techniques to organize thoughts and information	1	2	NT
d. Note-taking during lectures or reading assignments............................	1	2	NT
e. Summarizing or paraphrasing a key concept, an oral presentation, a passage from your reading, etc.	1	2	NT
f. Generating test questions as a study strategy......................................	1	2	NT
g. Responding to writing prompts (extended questions) about assigned readings or lecture material	1	2	NT
h. Brief in-class writing activities related to lecture material......................	1	2	NT
i. Other (please specify) _____			

SECTION 6—SETTING INDIVIDUAL WRITING GOALS FOR YOUR WIC COURSE

Q22. **This WIC course is an excellent place to develop and strengthen writing skills that are relevant to your major—skills that will increase your employability and contribute to your professional success regardless of your chosen career. To make the most of this opportunity, set some personal writing goals for your WIC course, as follows:**

➲ *Think for a few moments about the kinds of writing you expect to do in your first job after graduation. Think, too, about the kind of writer you want to be in your first job.*

➲ *Next, think about any gaps that exist between your current writing skills and those you want—or will need—to possess in your future workplace. To close these gaps, what needs to change about your writing?*

➲ *With these thoughts in mind, formulate two writing goals that* **you** *want to achieve in this WIC class.*

   NOTE: These goals may or may not coincide with your instructor's specified writing goals for this course. Whether they do coincide is not important. These are your **individual writing goals** *for this class, and the strategies you develop for achieving them will be largely up to you.*

➲ *Finally,* **record your two writing goals both in the box below** **<u>and on your course syllabus.</u>**

My two writing goals for this class are:

1.

2.

Q23. **Please use the remaining space to make any comments you may have about WIC courses in general, this course specifically, and/or this questionnaire. Thank you again for completing the questionnaire.**

NAME: _____

ME 418 End-of-Term Writing Self Assessment
(due Wednesday, November 30)

THE PURPOSE OF THIS WRITING SELF-ASSESSMENT is to give you a chance to reflect on your writing progress during the first term of your WIC course and to establish personal writing objectives for the second term. This is a critical-thinking exercise whose primary beneficiary is YOU.

BEFORE YOU COMPLETE THIS ASSESSMENT, please take a few moments to review your responses to the Start of Term Writing Questionnaire that you completed 10 weeks ago. Then write a brief response to each of the questions below. BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF! While you will receive credit for completing this assessment and your quality effort is expected, your self-ratings on your progress will not affect your grade for the assignment.

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1. Below, please (a) record the two writing goals you set for yourself on the STQ; (b) list the strategies you have used this term (either independently and/or through project group or class activities) in pursuing each of these goals; and (c) rate yourself on the progress you have made toward achieving each of these goals.

   PERSONAL WRITING GOAL 1:

   _____

   Strategies Used in Pursuing Goal 1:

   _____

   Progress Rating on Goal 1 (check one)

   __ I fully achieved this goal
   __ I made excellent progress on this goal
   __ I made moderate progress on this goal
   __ I made little progress on this goal
   __ I made no progress on this goal

   PERSONAL WRITING GOAL 2:

   _____

   Strategies Used in Pursuing Goal 2:

   _____

   Progress Rating on Goal 2 (check one)

   __ I fully achieved this goal
   __ I made excellent progress on this goal
   __ I made moderate progress on this goal
   __ I made little progress on this goal
   __ I made no progress on this goal

2. In addition to working (or not) on the personal goals listed in Question 1, briefly describe other efforts you have made this term toward improving your writing skills; and comment on your successes in these efforts and/or roadblocks you have encountered along the way. What kinds of instruction, tools, or resources might have helped you to be more successful in these efforts?

3. Please comment briefly on anything new you have learned this term about the processes and/or products involved in engineering writing, as related both to your senior design project and your anticipated engineering career.

4. Thinking back on the writing you have done this term and the writing evaluations you have received from your instructor and project mentors/advisors, and taking into account the kinds of writing you are doing in this course and the career path that you expect to pursue after graduation, please consider whether you want in ME 419 to (1) continue focusing on the goals listed in question 1 or (2) revise your personal focus and name some new goals.

    Then, in the spaces below, list two personal writing goals that you intend to pursue in ME 419 and identify several strategies that you will use in pursuing each of them.

    PERSONAL WRITING GOAL 1 for ME 419:

    _____

    Strategies I intend to use in pursuing ME 419 Goal 1:

    _____

    PERSONAL WRITING GOAL 2 for ME 419:

    _____

    Strategies I intend to use in pursuing ME 419 Goal 2:

    _____

ME 418/19 END OF COURSE WRITING PROCESS MEMO

To reflect on, evaluate, and take ownership of your growth as communicators and work-team members during ME 418/19, respond to questions 1–4 below. Your memo should be no more than two pages (total).

1. Respond to **one** of the following questions (a, b, or c) about your development as communicators and engineers in ME 418/419:
   a. How did writing the design report (from beginning to end, not just the final draft) enhance your understanding of engineering design and your work-readiness as a mechanical engineers?
      or
   b. What skills did you gain in written and oral communication in the process of completing the design project and report?
      or
   c. What were the two writing goals you identified in your writing self-assessment at the end of last term, and how are they reflected and implemented in your final group report? How did your fellow team members contribute to your progress on these goals?

2. Assess the collaborative aspect of your team's design report-writing process by addressing **all** of the following questions:
   a. In completing the design report, what did you learn about collaboration and how did your skills as a collaborative writer/team member improve during ME 418/19?
   b. Please list each of your design team's members (including yourself) by name, and for each team member, briefly describe the following:
      • What that member contributed to the preparation of your design project report (in terms of both content and process).
      • That individual's greatest strengths and weaknesses as a team member/collaborative writer.

3. The following comment comes from [XXX], Senior VP of Manufacturing at [XXX Co] and one of our department's Industry Affiliate Board members:

   > "Technical reports, user manuals or other detailed instructions, and proposals for capital spending are the most frequent needs for engineering writing I encounter at Oregon Freeze Dry. As a reader, I look at clarity as the indicator of the writer's understanding of the subject matter. If I read an unclear document or proposal, I assume the writer doesn't fully understand their subject. After asking clarifying questions, however, I often find with engineers this may not be the case. They simply didn't invest the time to write from the reader's perspective. They're often not writing to improve someone else's understanding, but rather to complete a necessary task in pursuit of a bigger goal (e.g. project completion). …If I had to offer one single piece of advice to Engineers, write from the reader's perspective, not from their own."

   What have you learned about "writing from the reader's perspective" in ME 418/19? How did your group approach this task in preparing your design report?

4. As you know, this is the first year that the ME Senior Design course has also been the ME WIC course. We want your feedback and suggestions for course improvement.
   a. Given that the two basic goals of WIC courses are to (1) hone students' workplace communication skills and (2) use writing as a tool for learning course content, what additions or changes would you recommend for the writing component of next year's ME 418/19 course?
   b. What is one piece of writing advice you'd offer to next year's ME 418/19 students?
   c. No matter how skilled at writing and communicating we become, all of us can always improve in this area. As you complete ME 418/19 and move into the workplace as interns or employees, what writing/communications-related goal(s) will you be focusing on?