

## **PROFICIENCY INFUSION GUIDELINES**

**These are guidelines, not a checklist of required elements. Course proposals should include an explanation of how the course is suitable to the requirement, understanding that the approval committee will consider courses that approach these elements creatively, with disciplinary norms in mind.**

**Not every course is suited to every proficiency; should you choose to infuse a course, you should select the proficiencies that best balance course content and course assignments (i.e. infusion of any proficiency should not infringe or radically change overall course content). Teaching of the proficiency should be in the service of course content. If it alters the content then the course should be redesigned and resubmitted to the college for approval as a new course.**

## **Reading and Writing Proficiency Guidelines**

### **DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION**

Employers nationwide have noted that college graduates come to them with unrefined reading and writing skills. Seton Hall's Core Curriculum Committee, in consultation with the faculty at large, has determined that Seton Hall graduates should have improved abilities in these areas. In prior faculty development projects, Seton Hall professors have also found that students learn better when they are actively involved in their learning, and reading and writing are critical components of active learning.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Students in reading- and writing-infused courses will be required to read and write more frequently and in a variety of forms, and that reading and writing will be responded to in ways that are explicit and meaningful and will validate reading and writing as intellectual activities worth pursuing. In order to accomplish this student-learning objective, faculty will construct effective reading and writing assignments and develop a clear assessment system for commenting upon and grading reading and writing. Reading- and writing-infused courses will increase the amount of reading and writing students do in their classes and thereby improve the quality of students' reading, writing, and learning.

In order for a Seton Hall University course to be approved as reading- and writing-intensive, it should adhere to the following guidelines. These are guidelines, not a checklist of required elements. Course proposals should include an explanation of how the course is suitable to the requirement, understanding that the core proficiency course approval committee will consider courses that approach these elements creatively, with disciplinary norms in mind.

### **COURSE READING MATERIALS**

*The Bedford Handbook* (students buy this book for ENGL 1201, 1202 classes).  
A variety of course reading materials, as described below.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Writing Requirements**

1. Formal (graded) writing assignments (the committee\* recommends two or more) equaling a total of at least 15 pages, following the guidelines below:
  - a. Drafting process must take place for at least one formal, graded writing assignment. Outline and draft submitted with some type of feedback – instructor, classmate, and/or Writing Center tutor – with opportunity for revision.
  - b. At least one formal writing assignment must involve research, referencing, use of outside sources, and/or citations.
2. At least one-third of course grade based on formal writing (including graded essays, essay exams, quizzes, writing for traditional and multimedia presentations).
3. Regular, informal (nongraded) writing assignments – possibly weekly – to take place both in and out of class. Informal writing should be used in the course as appropriate and could include a variety of journal formats (free writing, double-entry, writing prompts), blogs, discussion board, quick-writes, question responses, and collaborative writing.
4. Some time spent in class teaching and/or discussing the processes of writing.

### **Reading requirements**

1. Besides textbook reading, other types of academic and professional reading should be required. These readings could include primary documents, scholarly articles, biographies, autobiographies, novels, professional journals, press releases, case studies, on-line readings, popular press pieces, and websites.
2. Assign a significant amount of course reading; at least three to six hours on average per week, depending on the level of the course, is recommended.
3. Reading must be regularly linked to writing assignments, for example, journals, double-entry journals, reflections, in-class writing, formal papers, and/or essay exams.
4. Some time spent in class teaching and/or discussing the processes, strategies, and modes of analysis of reading in the discipline.

## **RESOURCES**

In addition to the sample syllabi, assignment sheets, and assessments available in the Reading/Writing Proficiency Module in Blackboard, the following core readings for faculty teaching reading- and writing-infused courses are essential to understanding the importance and the process of infusing reading and writing into a given course.

An Introduction to WAC

<http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/>

"Inventing the University" by David Bartholomae  
[Inventing the University.pdf](#)

"Teaching with Writing"  
<http://web.princeton.edu/sites/writing/TWW.pdf>

"Harvard Writing Project Bulletin on Responding to Student Writing"  
[Harvard Writing Project Bulletin 2000.pdf](#)

"The Science of Scientific Writing"  
<http://www.amstat.org/publications/jcgs/sci.pdf>

## TESTS/GRADING

Essay tests and take home exams can be considered writing assignments, however, students must write their answers in sentences and paragraphs, not in short phrases. Tests based on readings can be considered assessments of those readings. Grading criteria must be made explicit in the syllabus and assignment sheets. Students should be given the grading guidelines prior to handing in the assignment.

## GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Reading and writing are used to assess student learning of the course content yet students are also assessed in the proficiency of reading and writing. This requires the use of rubrics, scoring guides, drafts with feedback, and criteria checklists. For instance, writing assignments should be explained to students using 'assignment sheets' and graded with scoring guides that include criteria for evaluation and point values. Feedback is given on drafts of formal writing for students to incorporate into the final paper.

## PROFICIENCY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

1. Due to the reading of drafts with specific feedback by the course professor, the recommended enrollment for a reading/writing-intensive course is 15-18 students. Reading and writing products should be formally assessed with explicit criteria outlined for students.

2. A Reading/Writing Proficiency Paragraph must be visible on the front page of the syllabus and should include the following:

**Opening sentence:** *"A Seton Hall University reading/writing-intensive course will include a significant amount of formal and informal writing, several hours of academic and professional reading per week, all contributing to at least one-third of the total course grade."*

The paragraph should also include:

a) How reading/writing applies to the course – types of writing, types of reading, types of grading. b) What is the value of reading/writing to the discipline?

3. Other considerations for the syllabus include:

- a) a list of assignments
- b) grading percentages/weights

- c) a plagiarism statement/policy
- d) a disability statement
- e) a class attendance statement

4. Syllabus requirements for submission as an R/W infused course:

- a) sample assignment sheets, assessments, grading criteria
- b). a plagiarism statement/policy
- c). a disability statement
- d) a class attendance statement

### **GENERAL ASSESSMENT GUIDELINE FOR EACH PROFICIENCY**

Instructors should be aware that the University is charged with assessing the success of infusing courses with proficiencies. The best assessment will be based upon what faculty members believe is happening in their classrooms. The Core has adopted the principle that, on a department-wide basis, instructors teaching infused courses will meet to evaluate the extent to which students are attaining the chosen proficiency. These meetings will be evidence- and criteria-based. That is, evidence from student work and the application of criteria chosen by the instructors should be the basis of discussions at meetings held at the end of each year or semester. Brief reports will summarize the conclusions reached, the basis upon which they were made, one or two suggestions for improving instruction, and possible requests for resources or faculty development to facilitate those improvements.