

Program: Professional Writing Minor

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Completed by: Scott Gage

Please complete this form for each undergraduate, minor, certificate, and graduate program (e.g., B.A., B.S., M.S.) in your department. Please copy any addenda (e.g., rubrics) and paste them in this document, and return it to Erin Frew, [erin.frew@colostate-pueblo.edu](mailto:erin.frew@colostate-pueblo.edu) as an email attachment before June 2, 2014. You'll also find the form at the assessment website at <http://www.colostate-pueblo.edu/Assessment/ResultsAndReports/Pages/default.aspx>.

Please describe the 2013-2014 assessment activities for the program in Part I. Use Column H to describe improvements planned for 2014-2015 based on the assessment process. In Part II, please describe activities engaged in during 2013-2014 designed to close-the-loop (improve the program) based on assessment activities and the information gathered in 2012-2013. Thank you.

1. Program student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessed in this cycle, processes, results, and recommendations.

A. Which of the program SLDs were assessed during this cycle? Please include the outcome(s) verbatim from the assessment plan.	B. When was this SLO last assessed? Please indicate the semester and year.	C. What method was used for assessing the SLO? Please include a copy of any rubrics used in the assessment process.	D. Who was assessed? Please fully describe the student group(s) and the number of students or artifacts involved.	E. What is the expected achievement level and how many or what proportion of students should be at it?	F. What were the results of the assessment?	G. What were the department's conclusions about student performance?	H. What changes/improvements to the <u>program</u> are planned based on this assessment?
<b>Outcome #1: Create rhetorically-effective documents that demonstrate</b>	<b>The minor's first outcome was last assessed in AY 2012-2013 (Spring 2013)</b>	<b>Two faculty members who do not teach in the professional writing minor evaluated seven</b>	<b>Seven students enrolled in ENG 305 Technical and Scientific Report Writing in Fall 2013 were</b>	<b>The professional writing minor's expectation is that 75% of assignments will.</b>	<b>ENG 305 aggregate score (seven instructions evaluated from 9:1e- urs ) =</b>	<b>The assignments evaluated from ENG 326 Writing for the Web fulfilled program expectations for</b>	<b>This year's assessment of the professional writing minor reveals that the rubric keyed to the program's first SLO needs significant revision.</b>

<p>the standards and expectations for documents employed in professional settings</p> <p>Outcome #2: Utilize a variety of media ranging from standard prose, to video, and to other digitally-based media in the creation of those documents</p>	<p>specifically). The second outcome, which was newly-developed in Spring 2013, has not yet been assessed.</p>	<p>sets of instructions created in ENG 305 and six collaboratively-created web sites produced in ENG 326. The faculty members used two rubrics keyed to each SLO assessed (please find both rubrics included below).</p>	<p>involved in the assessment of the minor's first SLO (three students did not submit instructions). All students enrolled in ENG 326 Writing for the Web in Spring 2014 were involved in the assessment of the minor's second SLO. Both classes were comprised mostly of junior- and senior-level students majoring in either English or mass comm. ENG 305 also included students majoring in chemistry, psychology, and computer science. Many of the students in both classes were enrolled as professional writing minors.</p>	<p>register an aggregate score 2.5 or above. Not meeting that benchmark will trigger a revision of the professional writing minor's curriculum to address the deficiency.</p>	<p>2.42</p> <p>Percentage of ENG 305 assignments registering an aggregate score of 2.5 or higher: 54%</p> <p>ENG 326 aggregate score (6 collaborative web sites evaluated from one course) = 3.54</p> <p>Percentage of ENG 326 assignments registering an aggregate score of 2.5 or higher: 100%</p>	<p>performance as outlined in the professional writing minor's assessment plan. The assignments evaluated from ENG 305, however, fell far short of fulfilling program expectations.</p>	<p>Specifically, the program needs to revise the final two criteria listed on the rubric as they define what constitutes an effective rhetorical text too narrowly. In particular, the criteria pertaining to identification needs to be revised to address an orientation to rhetoric that can account for the kind of rhetorical action that occurs in technical writing, especially instructions. In revising that criteria, the program as a whole will have to change the ways it defines and teaches rhetoric. Its current way of teaching it does not account for the array of writing taught in the minor.</p>
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11. Follow-up (closing the loop) on results and activities from previous assessment cycles. In this section, please describe actions taken during this cycle that were based on, or implemented to address, the results of assessment from previous cycles.

A. What SLO(s) did you address? Please include the outcome(s) verbatim from the assessment plan.	B. When was this SLO last assessed?	C. What were the recommendations for change from the previous assessment?	D. Were the recommendations for change acted upon? If not, why?	E. What were the results of the changes? If the changes were not effective, what are the next steps for the new recommendations?
<p><b>Outcome #1:</b> Create rhetorically-effective documents that demonstrate the standards and expectations for documents employed in professional settings</p> <p><b>Outcome #2:</b> Utilize a variety of media ranging from standard prose, to video, and to other digitally-based media in the creation of those documents</p>	<p>The minor's first outcome was last assessed in AY 2012-2013 (Spring 2013 specifically). The second outcome, which was newly-developed in Spring 2013, has not yet been assessed.</p>	<p>The previous assessment did not make recommendations for change to the program.</p>	<p>Because no recommendations for change were made in the program's AY 2012-2013 assessment, no actionable steps toward change were taken in AY 2013-2014.</p>	<p>Because no actionable steps toward change were taken in AY 2013-2014, the program cannot report on the effectiveness of changes made to the program.</p>

Professional Writing Minor Assessment Rubric  
Outcome#1

Please use the following rubric to assess the professional writing minor's first program outcome: to create rhetorically-effective documents that demonstrate the standards and expectations for documents employed in professional settings. To assess this outcome, score the text you have been given per each of the criteria below using a scale of 1-4 (1 = the text fulfills the criterion poorly; 4 = the text fulfills the criterion excellently). Please highlight in yellow the score you are awarding to each criterion. For a description of each criterion, please see the second page.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Seeks to resolve an identifiable exigence	1	2	3	4
Communicates to an identifiable rhetorical audience	1	2	3	4
Invites appropriate identification with the rhetorical audience	1	2	3	4
Fulfills the standards and expectations of genre	1	2	3	4

Total Score:

## Description of Criteria

1) **Seeks to resolve an identifiable exigence:** According to Lloyd Bitzer (1968), an exigence is an urgent problem or need that may only be resolved through discourse. An exigence, Bitzer contends, arises as a result of some event or occurrence. From this perspective, rhetorical discourse is always a response to an exigence. According to Richard Vatz (1973), however, an exigence does not exist externally to discourse but is, instead, created by discourse. To that end, a rhetorically-effective text is one that signals to the audience the problem or need the text seeks to resolve; readers should have a clear understanding of what the text is trying to accomplish by having a clear understanding of its exigence.

- A score of 1 means the text leaves readers with no understanding of the need or problem it seeks to resolve
- A score of 2 means the text provides readers with only a confused understanding of the exigence, leaving readers to guess at possibilities
- A score of 3 means the text offers readers a clearer indication of the exigence but may still feature ambiguities, leaving readers to guess at a more limited range of possibilities
- A score of 4 means the text clearly and explicitly identifies the exigence for the audience (even **if** the text addresses multiple exigencies, it will indicate each one so that the reader understands what it seeks to accomplish)

2) **Communicates to an identifiable rhetorical audience:** While a text may address multiple audiences (Park 1982), it may only resolve a given exigence if it addresses what Bitzer termed a "rhetorical audience," individuals who have the means and capacity to resolve an exigence. According to Bitzer, a rhetorical audience may include one of the following types of individuals: (1) individuals with the ability to resolve an exigence directly or (2) individuals who may pressure those in the previous category to act. Rhetorically-effective texts, therefore, communicate directly to either category of individuals capable of resolving a given exigence.

- A score of **1** means the text leaves readers with no understanding of the audience to whom the text is directed
- A score of 2 means the text provides readers with some indication of the audience but also features significant ambiguity, leaving readers to guess at multiple possibilities
- A score of 3 means the text clearly identifies and communicates to an audience, but the audience may not be a rhetorical audience (i.e., may not be able to resolve the exigence)
- A score of 4 means the text identifies and communicates directly to a rhetorical audience as defined above

3) **Invites appropriate identification with the rhetorical audience:** To be rhetorically-effective, a text must not only communicate to a clearly identifiable rhetorical audience, it must also make appropriate appeals to the audience in order to induce the audience's "cooperation" (Burke 1969). These appeals are traditionally treated in terms of ethos (character/credibility), logos (reason), and pathos (emotion) (Aristotle); however, any instance of persuasion must be preceded by identification (Ratcliffe 2005). From that perspective, then, a rhetorically-effective text will first and foremost invite identification with the rhetorical audience. In general, a text will invite identification in any of the following ways: **(1)** by advancing attitudes and perspectives with which the audience may agree or toward which the audience may feel

sympathy, (2) by using language and imagery (if applicable) that may be relatable to the audience, and/or (3) by fulfilling the expectations an audience may have toward a given genre.

- A score of 1 means the text makes no effort to invite identification with the rhetorical audience
- A score of 2 means the text makes an effort to invite identification with the audience but does so inappropriately (e.g., the text advances an attitude toward which the audience is likely to feel unsympathetic)
- A score of 3 means the text invites identification with the audience but fails to do so consistently or effectively (e.g., the language used in a given text shifts from an appropriate to an inappropriate degree of formality)
- A score of 4 means the text invites identification with the audience in a way that is appropriate, consistent, and effective

4) **Fulfills the standards and expectations of genre:** Because genres are "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations" (Miller 1984), they create expectations for audience members both in terms of formal characteristics and in terms of rhetorical strategy (e.g., a genre will typically employ common methods of identification). While writers certainly possess the agency to defy the standards and expectations of a given genre, commonplace assumptions hold that texts are more effective rhetorically when they fulfill such standards and expectations. As such, a rhetorically-effective text should fulfill the standards and expectations of the genre it represents.

- A score of 1 means the text defies or neglects the standards and expectations of the genre it represents
- A score of 2 means the text fulfills some of the standards and expectations of the genre it represents while defying or neglecting others (e.g., a formal letter has included an inside address but has neglected to include a salutation and has been written in informal language)
- A score of 3 means the text fulfills all of the standards and expectations of the genre it represents but has not always done so effectively (e.g., a web site features some pages lacking effective contrast)
- A score of 4 means the text fulfills all of the standards and expectations of the genre it represents consistently and effectively

Professional Writing Minor Assessment Rubric  
Outcome#2

Please use the following rubric to assess the professional writing minor's second program outcome: to utilize a variety of media, ranging from standard prose, to video, and to other digitally-based media, in the creation of those documents. To assess this outcome, score the text you have been given per each of the criteria below using a scale of 1-4 (1 =the text fulfills the criterion poorly; 4 =the text fulfills the criterion excellently). Please highlight in yellow the score you are awarding to each criterion. For a description of each criterion, please see the second page.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Employs multimodality in the communication of its <b>message</b>	1	2	3	4
Designs multiple media to facilitate readability	1	2	3	4
Communicates a congruent message or effect	1	2	3	4
Fulfills usability standards	1	2	3	4

Total Score:

## Description of Criteria

1) Employs multimodality in the communication of its message: As defined by Sheridan, Ridolfo, and Michel (2012), multimodality refers to "communicative practices that integrate multiple semiotic resources." As such, employing multimodality in a text involves the simultaneous usage of various media sources, including verbal, visual, and aural media. A text that uses multimodality to communicate its message will incorporate a minimum of two forms of media.

- A score of 1 means the text communicates its message only through one semiotic source (e.g., the text only features the written word)
- A score of 2 means the text communicates its message through two forms of media, but one of the forms is dominant (e.g., the text accompanies the written word with photographic images)
- A score of 3 means the text communicates its message through three forms of media (e.g., the text frames the photographic images with colored borders)
- A score of 4 means the text communicates its message through four or more forms of media (e.g., the text features an embedded video with the written word, the photographic images, and the colored borders)

2) Design multiple media to facilitate readability: All texts should be designed to facilitate readability, meaning that texts should be designed both to ensure ease of reading and to express how the different elements appearing on a page or screen are related. This need is especially pronounced when texts are multimodal. To be designed for readability, texts should employ at least four basic design principles: alignment, repetition, contrast, and proximity (Williams, 2008). Alignment refers to how the media on a page or screen are lined up (e.g., whether or not a block of text is aligned to the left margin or the right margin); repetition refers to the use of repeated elements across a text (e.g., the text consistently frames images with a black border); contrast refers to the use of difference to direct a reader's attention and to ensure ease of reading (e.g., a text with a white background uses a black typeface); and proximity refers to the distance between media that appear on a page or screen (e.g., a photograph is placed near a column of written text). Contrast and proximity are especially important for multimodal texts because (1) contrast can create a visual hierarchy indicating the sequence in which the page or screen should be read and (2) proximity can express the semantic relationship of media on a page or screen (e.g., the closer media are on a page, the more they are intended to work together to communicate meaning).

- A score of 1 means the text employs none of the basic design principles and is difficult to read and interpret as a result
- A score of 2 means the text employs at least one or two of the basic design principles but remains difficult to read and interpret
- A score of 3 means the text employs at least two or three of the basic design principles and although easy to read, is ambiguous regarding the relationship of the media appearing on the page or screen
- A score of 4 means the text employs all of the design principles, is easy to read, and clearly expresses the relationship of the media appearing on the page or screen



3) **Communicates a congruent message or effect:** The various media that constitute a multimodal text should employ "interanimation" (Blakesley, 2004). That is, the different media should work congruently so that the "whole...is decidedly greater than the sum of its parts" (Sheridan, Ridolfo, Michel, 2012). A multimodal text, thus, communicates a congruent message or effect when the different media work together. As such, a medium appearing in a multimodal text should neither dominate nor assume greater importance than the media that accompany it. Also, the media appearing in a multimodal text should have a clear relationship to one another that contributes to the communication of a singular message and/or effect.

- A score of 1 both means that the text features a dominant medium and that the media comprising the text have no clear relationship to one another
- A score of 2 means either that the text features a dominant medium or that the media comprising the text have no clear relationship to one another
- A score of 3 means the text features no dominant medium but the media comprising the text have an ambiguous relationship to one another
- A score of 4 means both that the media of a text have clear relationships to one another and that these relationships work equally to communicate a singular message and/or effect

4) **Fulfills usability standards:** Because multimodal texts, especially those that are web-based or digital, depend so much on design, their designs must be easily understood and easily used by readers/users. Stated differently, multimodal texts must fulfill usability standards. These standards include five components (Nielsen, 2012): (1) learnability: how quickly a reader/user understands a given design (e.g., how quickly a reader/user understands how information is designed on a page or screen); (2) efficiency: how quickly a reader/user can use the design to accomplish tasks (e.g., how quickly a reader/user can find information he or she may be seeking); (3) memorability: how easily a reader/user can resume interacting with a design (e.g., how quickly a reader/user can resume using a text after taking time away from it); (4) errors: how quickly a reader/user can overcome an error in a design (e.g., how quickly a reader/user can resume engagement with a text should the design suddenly lose repetition); and (5) satisfaction: how pleasant a design may be to interact with (e.g., how much satisfaction a reader/user derived from engaging the design of a text).

- A score of 1 means the text fulfills no usability standards
- A score of 2 means the text fulfills at least two usability standards
- A score of 3 means the text fulfills at least four usability standards
- A score of 4 means the text fulfills all five usability standards