Welcome (Back) to the Writing Program @ CWRU!

August 17, 2015
Kimberly Emmons
Associate Professor of English & Director of Composition

Who We Are

- CWRU Writing Program Administrative Faculty:
  - Director of Composition
  - Director of Writing Resource Center
  - SAGES Instructional Coordinator
  - Director of ESL Writing
  - Director of Foundational Writing Instruction
  - Director of Professional/Technical Communication

- Writing Faculty:
  - Full- and Part-Time English/SAGES Lecturers
  - Graduate Student Writing Instructors
  - Full- and Part-Time SAGES Fellows
  - SAGES Undergraduate Peer Crew Members
What We Do

The Writing Program operates in three primary domains:

- **Writing Pedagogy & Instruction** – Curriculum Design: SAGES, First-Year Composition, Professional/Technical Communication
- **Support for Writers** – Writing Resource Center, Online Resources, Faculty Consultations
- **Writing Advocacy** – Intellectual Leadership: SAGES Portfolio Committee, Directed Self Placement, Campus Writing Research & Reporting

Writing Pedagogy & Instruction

- Stand-Alone Composition Courses
  - ENGL 148: Introduction to Composition; ENGL 150: Expository Writing

- Professional & Disciplinary Writing Courses
  - ENGL 217A: Business & Professional Writing; ENGL 217B: Writing for the Health Professions; ENGL 398: Professional Communication for Engineers

- SAGES General Education (Writing-Intensive) Courses
  - First Seminar (including ESL & Foundations sections); University Seminar; First Seminar Transfer Seminar
Support for Writers

• Writing Resource Center: Consultations, Student Workshops, In-Class Visits

• Individualized Tutorial Courses: ENGL 180: Writing Tutorial; ENGL 181: Academic Skills Tutorial; ENGL 186: Writing Workshop for Researchers

• SAGES Peer Writing Crew

• Online Resources

Writing Advocacy

• SAGES Portfolio Reading Committee – Since 2009

• Directed Self Placement (for incoming first-year students) – New in 2015

• Learning Outcomes & Assessment Rubrics
Writing Program Philosophy

The Goal of Writing Instruction is to:

- Produce better writers, as a means of ensuring better written artifacts

At the end of their CWRU Careers, students should be able to:

- Ask a question, define a problem, or locate an occasion for writing
- Research the question/problem/occasion
- Communicate a response to the question/problem/occasion
- Share the response & gather feedback from others
- Revise the response (taking into account feedback, other resources/research, etc.)

SAGES Mission & Learning Outcomes

- SAGES (5-seminar sequence) forms the backbone of CWRU’s General Education Requirements (in all undergraduate schools).
- Five Core Student Learning Outcomes:
  - Academic Inquiry
  - Critical Thinking & Ethical Deliberation
  - Research & Information Literacy
  - Persuasive Writing
  - Oral & New Media Communication
- CWRU embeds writing instruction in the scholarly acts of exploration, innovation, and knowledge creation. (Writing enables us to “Think Beyond the Possible”)

FSEM Writing Assignment

**Assignment: Genre Analysis**

In this essay, you will articulate an argument about what a particular medical (or health-related) genre tells us about our understandings of health/illness.

To make this argument, you will need to demonstrate your understanding of the concept of “genre” as it is defined by rhetorical genre theorists (whom we have read in class) and apply that definition to the set of texts you have collected.

Then, using the careful analytical tools you have been developing all semester, you will demonstrate how the features of the genre you have selected support your argument about the genre’s use, significance, and/or meaning.

**Learning Objectives**

- **Participate in academic conversation (argumentation)**
- **Read, summarize & apply scholarly concepts**
- **Critical Thinking & Ethical Deliberation**

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**Writing Rubric (2015)**

- **Engagement:** The writer’s ability to identify, make legible/interesting, and respond insightfully to a significant question, problem, or occasion for writing.

- **Argument:** The writer’s ability to develop and sustain a persuasive/compelling response to the identified problem, question, or occasion for writing.

- **Evidence:** The writer’s ability to locate, evaluate, and integrate appropriate forms of supporting material.

- **Readability:** The writers’ ability to arrange sentences and paragraphs clearly and coherently, as well as to use language that is consistently correct and comprehensible.
Application of Rubric: Engagement

SAGES pushes students to engage with current research and thinking about a wide range of topics. In each writing assignment, students should thoroughly understand – and be able to explain – the central question, problem, or idea that motivates their written work. At its root, this category assesses how well a paper performs the task(s) laid out in the assignment; but good, persuasive writing should be compelling to a smart reader who may not know the specifics of the assignment prompt. So, a proficient writer will provide necessary context in a compelling and audience-aware way.

- Content/Ideas
- Purpose, Context, and Audience

Application of Rubric: Argument

SAGES asks students not only to engage with questions/problems, but also to respond with persuasive and valuable answers and solutions. This category assesses students’ abilities to present their contributions in the forms of clearly stated and thoroughly developed arguments. The proficient writer will articulate a strong, precise, and insightful thesis that governs the development of the paper.

- Thesis Statement
- Reasoning/Development
Application of Rubric: Evidence

SAGES introduces students to a range of evidence and teaches them to evaluate and make use of credible, persuasive information in their writing. This category assesses students’ abilities to identify appropriate (often scholarly) evidence to support their arguments, as well as their abilities to accommodate and use potentially discrepant data or contradictory ideas.

- Quality
- Use

Application of Rubric: Readability

SAGES teaches students to attend to the mechanics and style of their written performances. This category assesses papers on their “surface” features, including mechanical correctness and artful style.

- Arrangement
- Sentence Level Correctness and Style
Your Turn

• Identify at least 3 places in the essay where your criteria is visible
  • 1s: Engagement
  • 2s: Argument
  • 3s: Evidence
  • 4s: Readability

• Evaluate the essay (“Death Certificates as a Genre”) for each sub-category of your criteria (Proficient, Acceptable, Developing, Unacceptable)

• Recommend at least 1 activity or revision strategy related to your criteria

Conclusions: Writing Instruction @ CWRU

• Build on students’ prior knowledge
• Teaching writing as a process rather than a product
• Encourage students to become reflective writers
• Facilitate students’ use of resources for writers at all levels
What’s Ahead This Semester

• Writing Program Calendar – Staff Meetings, etc. (updates/rooms announced via Google Calendar; http://www.case.edu/writing)

• Celebration of Student Writing – Friday, December 4 (see http://www.case.edu/writing/celebration.html)

• FSEM & USEM Essay Prize Nominations – 2 students may be nominated from each seminar (forms available: http://case.edu/writing/)

What’s Ahead This Week

• English 398 Staff Meeting (Tuesday 9:30-11:30; Olin 303)

• Teaching Collaboratively in SAGES (Tues 1:30-3; Bellflower 101)

• WRC New Consultant Orientation (Thursday 9-12; Bellflower 101)

• EGSA Meeting (Thursday 3-4; Guilford 107)

• WRC Staff Meeting (Friday 10-12; Bellflower 101)

• English Department Picnic (Friday 4-6; Guilford Lawn/First Floor)
Welcome To 2015-2016!

- Kim’s Office Hours:
  - Guilford 322
  - 368-6924
  - kimberly.emmons@case.edu
  - Wednesdays 2:00-4:00 & by appointment

- Happy Hour: ABC Tavern (4:30-??)
CWRU Writing Program
Welcome to Academic Year 2015-2016

Writing Program Philosophy/Outcomes

At the end of their CWRU careers, students should be able to:

- Ask a question and/or define a problem
- Research the question/problem
- Communicate a response to the question/problem
- Share the response & gather feedback from others
- Revise the response (taking into account feedback, additional resources/viewpoints, etc.)

SAGES (the backbone of the CWRU General Education curriculum) and the Writing Program collaborate closely on student writing outcomes. Recently, SAGES streamlined its overall program goals – within which writing and communication are embedded at every level. Seminar leaders should include program and course outcomes in their course planning and on their syllabi.

Current SAGES Learning Outcomes: [http://sages.case.edu/2015/01/20/learning-outcomes/](http://sages.case.edu/2015/01/20/learning-outcomes/)

Based on these outcomes, the Writing Program has developed a rubric for the kind of research-supported academic argumentation we expect from our graduates. The rubric focuses on four governing areas:

- **Engagement:** The writer’s ability to identify, make legible/interesting, and respond insightfully to a significant question, problem, or occasion for writing.
- **Argument:** The writer’s ability to develop and sustain a persuasive/compelling response to the identified problem, question, or occasion for writing.
- **Evidence:** The writer’s ability to locate, evaluate, and integrate appropriate forms of supporting material.
- **Readability:** The writer’s ability to arrange sentences and paragraphs clearly and coherently, as well as to use language that is consistently correct and comprehensible.

Current Writing Rubric (and other important documents): [http://case.edu/writing/keydocs.html](http://case.edu/writing/keydocs.html)

Best Practices in Writing Instruction

Build on students’ prior knowledge: Read students’ writing early in the semester; Discuss students’ prior writing experiences & expectations

Teach writing as a process rather than a product: “Stage” writing assignments to build on & practice key skills (e.g., summary → critique → original argument)

Encourage students to become reflective writers: Reflection allows students to identify & generalize the skills they are learning and apply them to new situations (e.g., individual draft/assignment reflections, FSEM Writing Folder, SAGES Writing Portfolio Reflective Essay)

Facilitate students’ use of resources for writers at all levels: Writing Resource Center & SAGES Peer Writing Crew; Supplemental Instruction (coursework, office hours, etc.); Online tools & print/online texts (e.g., Purdue OWL, etc.)
CELEBRATE & PROMOTE EXCELLENT WRITING

Celebration of Student Writing – Friday Dec. 4 (noon-2:45, Tinkham Veale University Center). Register your course/students online by Oct. 23. See: http://www.case.edu/writing/celebration.html

SAGES First & University Seminar Prize Essays – for the best essays by first-year students. Nominate up to 2 student essays from your course for one of these prizes. For nomination forms, see: http://www.case.edu/writing

ADDITIONAL WRITING SUPPORT

Curricular Support for Students, for example:
• ENGL 180 (1 credit) – Writing Tutorial
• ENGL 148/150 (3 credits each) – Composition/Expository Writing
• ENGL 155 (3 credits) – Public Speaking

Consulting Support for Students & Faculty:
• Writing Resource Center (http://wrc.case.edu; phone: 368-6603; email: writingcenter@case.edu)
• SAGES Peer Writing Crew (https://students.case.edu/education/peer/)

WRC Workshops for Students:
• “Beyond the 5-Paragraph Essay” (Friday, 9/25, 12:35-1:35)
• “Considering the Source – How to Select & Use Evidence” (Friday, 10/30, 12:35-1:35)
• “Revision & Reflection” (Friday, 11/20, 12:35-1:35)

SAGES Writing Portfolio Workshops (Bellflower Hall):
• Tues, Oct 13, 11:30-12:45
• Thurs, Oct 22, 11:30-12:45
• Mon, Dec 7, 12:30-1:45
• Fri, Dec 11, 12:30-1:45

Workshops for Faculty:
• Group Grading Session (Friday, 10/23, 12:30-1:45, Bellflower 101 – essays for evaluation will be distributed in advance)

When in doubt, direct questions & comments to: writing@case.edu.

WRITING@CASE WEBSITE: http://www.case.edu/writing

Writing Program Google Calendar

Awards & Events (right column)
• FSEM & USEM Essay Prize Nomination Forms
• Celebration of Student Writing (Dec. 4, 2015; noon-2:45 p.m.; Adelbert Gym)

Key Documents (left column)
• Writing & Oral Communication Resources for Students (PDF Handout)
• FSEM & USEM Prize Essays (booklets of winning essays – published annually in April/December)
• SAGES Portfolio Reports
**WRITING PROGRAM – IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

**ADMINISTRATIVE EMAIL ALIASES**

- **writing@case.edu** for general inquiries
- **writingcenter@case.edu** for inquiries about the Writing Resource Center and its operation
- **english398@case.edu** for inquiries about Professional Communication for Engineers
- **sageswritingcrew@gmail.com** to reach the SAGES Peer Writing Crew e-dropbox

**WRITING PROGRAM (ENGLISH DEPARTMENT)**

- **Kimberly Emmons**, Director of Composition: **kimberly.emmons@case.edu**, 368-6924
- **Megan Swihart Jewell**, Director of the Writing Resource Center: **megan.jewell@case.edu**, 368-3799
- **Erika Olbricht**, SAGES Instructional Coordinator: **erika.olbricht@case.edu**, 368-3799
- **Hee-Seung Kang**, Director of ESL services and curriculum: **hee-seung.kang@case.edu**, 368-2357
- **Martha Schaffer**, Director Foundations First Seminar: **martha.schaffer@case.edu**, 368-2452
- **Robin Evans**, Director of Professional Communication for Engineers (ENGL 398) Program: **robin.evans@case.edu**, 368-2965

**SEMINAR APPROACH TO GENERAL EDUCATION & SCHOLARSHIP (SAGES)**

- **Peter Whiting**, Director of SAGES: **peter.whiting@case.edu**, 368-3989
- **Michael Householder**, Associate Director of SAGES: **michael.householder@case.edu**, 368-4917
- **Janet Alder**, SAGES Administrative Assistant (course funds, SAGES finance & administration): **jra20@case.edu**, 368-5830
- **Sharmon Sollitto**, SAGES Administrative Assistant (Fourth Hour arrangements, campus/local events, Blackboard access): **sharmon.sollitto@case.edu**, 368-0691
- **Lance Parkin**, SAGES Administrative Assistant (general SAGES questions, room scheduling, etc.): **lance.parkin@case.edu**, 368-8954

**KELVIN SMITH LIBRARY**

- **Brian Gray**, Research Services Team Leader (Personal Librarian Program, Arranging work space in KSL): **bcg8@case.edu**, 368-8685
- **William Claspy**, Research Services Librarian (Research Instruction/Class sessions): KSL 201-N, **wpc@case.edu**, 368-3595

**EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR STUDENTS**

- **Judith Olson-Hammer**, Director of Educational Services for Students & SAGES Peer Writing Crew Co-Coordinator: **iko2@case.edu**, 368-8825
- **Arthur Evenchik**, Co-Coordinator, SAGES Peer Writing Crew: **arthur.evenchik@case.edu**, 368-0430
- **Elise Geither**, Assistant Director for Spoken English Programs: **ejg65@case.edu**, 368-5230
## SAGES (Seminar Approach to General Education and Scholarship) Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Mission</th>
<th>Level Objectives</th>
<th>Course Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to...)</th>
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</table>
| SAGES uses seminar-based instruction to teach students how to use the skills of academic inquiry, to think critically and ethically, to find information, and to communicate their ideas in writing and other media effectively. Its sequence of courses builds core academic skills, introduces discipline-specific concepts and methods, and then culminates in a capstone experience that demonstrates students’ ability to apply what they have learned. This mission is achieved through a commitment to five core student learning outcomes: ACADEMIC INQUIRY, CRITICAL THINKING AND ETHICAL DELIBERATION, RESEARCH AND INFORMATION LITERACY, PERSUASIVE WRITING, ORAL AND NEW MEDIA COMMUNICATION. | **(First Seminar)** To enable students to contribute to general academic conversations by establishing facility with core academic skills.  
(University Seminar) To enable students to contribute to general academic conversations by establishing expertise with core academic skills, including the ability to do independent research.  
**(Departmental Seminar)** To enable students to contribute to discipline-specific academic conversations by establishing facility with the specific concepts and methods of their chosen discipline.  
**(Capstone)** To enable students to apply their scholarly skills and knowledge in a capstone experience that contributes to the solution of a pressing question or problem. | • Participate in an academic conversation by contributing insightful, relevant ideas.  
• Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically and deliberate ethically.  
• Read, summarize, and apply scholarly concepts and information.  
• Write clearly and persuasively.  
• Effectively communicate information orally and/or through new media.  
• Participate in a variety of academic conversations by contributing insightful, relevant ideas.  
• Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to questions/problems.  
• Research and apply scholarly concepts and information.  
• Write clear, insightful, persuasive, research-based, and appropriately documented argumentative essays.  
• Effectively communicate information through oral and/or new media presentations.  
• Participate in disciplinary conversations by contributing insightful, relevant ideas.  
• Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to discipline-specific questions/problems.  
• Research and apply discipline-specific scholarly concepts and information.  
• Write clear, insightful, persuasive arguments using discipline-appropriate forms and conventions.  
• Effectively communicate information through discipline-appropriate oral and/or new media presentations.  
• Complete a capstone project that articulates insightful, relevant ideas that contribute to the solution of a vital question or problem within a discipline.  
• Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to a chosen question/problem within a discipline.  
• Perform original, independent, discipline-appropriate scholarship and apply it to a question/problem within a discipline.  
• Use a discipline-appropriate form to write a clear, insightful, persuasive, research-based, and appropriately documented argument that responds to a question/problem within a discipline.  
• Effectively communicate information to a public audience about one’s scholarship through discipline-appropriate oral and/or new media presentations. |
Definitions of SAGES Student Learning Outcomes

ACADEMIC INQUIRY.  Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to pose a question or problem relevant to an academic discipline and independently use knowledge to answer or solve it. Academic inquiry is founded on the ability to identify questions and problems that engage others. It includes the ability to apply appropriate theories and methods of investigation, ones capable of producing insightful ideas that help answer a question or solve a problem relevant to an academic discipline. In addition, academic inquiry is attended by certain attitudes: passion for learning, a sense of agency, an appreciation of deep rather than surface knowledge, and a willingness to reflect on and assess one’s own learning.

CRITICAL THINKING AND ETHICAL DELIBERATION.  Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to think and act with an awareness of their own values and reasoning, as well as an appreciation of the perspectives of others. Critical thinking starts with the ability to formulate questions and problems clearly and precisely. It also involves the ability to identify the assumptions that frame our thinking and determine our actions, as well as to gauge the degree to which those assumptions are accurate and valid. Critical thinkers are able to look at ideas and decisions from multiple perspectives, and consider open-mindedly the assumptions, implications, and practical consequences of alternative systems of thought. Based on this information, they derive well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards. This awareness of one’s own values and assumptions, combined with an appreciation of the different perspectives of others, forms the basis of ethical deliberation. By developing a coherent ethical framework and considering the likely consequences of a proposed solution as viewed by different value systems, ethical thinkers can make justified, autonomous choices about matters of the human good, of social justice, or of natural value, and do so with self-awareness and clarity.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION LITERACY.  Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to independently research and evaluate information to answer a question or solve a problem relevant to an academic discipline. This ability originates in the determination of the nature and extent of information needed to answer a question or solve a problem. It includes the skills needed to find, access, and evaluate that information critically, as well as to use it effectively and ethically in support of an answer or solution to a question or problem. In disciplines where inquiry depends on the generation and quantitative analysis of raw data, this outcome assumes that all students should understand how to use data once it has been processed into information.

PERSUASIVE WRITING.  Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to write a clear and persuasive argument in support of an answer to a question or a solution to a problem. In an academic setting, all effective communicators are able to express their ideas in writing. The emphasis that SAGES places on open-ended inquiry and critical thinking requires that students be able to articulate and defend an argument that supports an answer to a question or a solution to a problem. Effective communicators are able to express their ideas with an awareness of purpose, as well as how to engage both discipline-specific and broader audiences. In addition, although there may be variations in disciplinary conventions for writing genres and formats, persuasive academic writing demands that the explanation or defense of a proposed answer or solution use a coherent thesis to govern the structured and clear presentation of a persuasive argument based on reasons and evidence.

ORAL AND NEW MEDIA COMMUNICATION.  Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to communicate information in a clear and coherent formal oral or other media presentation appropriate to an academic discipline. In addition to being able to write persuasively, effective communicators can express their ideas using a range of disciplinary-appropriate media (e.g., discussion, oral presentations, posters, websites, videos, multimedia presentations, mobile apps) and genres (e.g., technical reports, funding proposals, ethnographies, journal articles, reviews). As with academic writing, effective communicators organize the presentation of ideas with an awareness of purpose and audience, and use their understanding of the medium and genre being used to ensure delivery of a clear central message.
# SAGES Writing Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content/Ideas</strong></td>
<td>Thoroughly engages a relevant and focused question or problem to reveal significant—perhaps even highly original—insight(s)</td>
<td>Thoroughly engages a relevant and mostly focused question or problem to reveal somewhat important insight(s)</td>
<td>Partially engages a relevant and somewhat focused question or problem to reveal some insight(s)</td>
<td>Inadequately engages a question or problem or merely reports what is already known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose, Context, and Audience</strong></td>
<td>Thorough and nuanced attention to purpose, context, and audience</td>
<td>Attends to purpose, context, and audience, though sometimes inconsistently or partially</td>
<td>Attends to purpose, context, and audience, though often inconsistently or partially</td>
<td>Little or no attention to purpose, context, and/or audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Statement</strong></td>
<td>Articulates argument through clear, focused, and precise thesis statement</td>
<td>Articulates argument through clear thesis statement, though it may be somewhat imprecise or broad in focus</td>
<td>Thesis statement only partially articulates argument or is too general</td>
<td>No thesis statement or thesis statement unrelated to the argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasoning/Development</strong></td>
<td>All parts of the argument (major and sub-claims) are developed thoroughly, deeply, and logically</td>
<td>Claims mostly developed, though contains one or two partially developed claims, or minor logical inconsistencies that do not seriously affect overall argument</td>
<td>Many claims are only moderately developed, or argument contains several minor—or one major—logical inconsistencies</td>
<td>Develops all claims superficially, repeats ideas, or wanders from the argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality</strong></td>
<td>Always uses relevant evidence from reliable and properly documented sources</td>
<td>Mostly uses relevant evidence from reliable and properly documented sources</td>
<td>Uses evidence from somewhat reliable sources documented to ensure retrievability</td>
<td>Evidence is missing, irrelevant, unreliable, or undocumented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use</strong></td>
<td>Consistently integrates and fully explains evidence to support all claims thoroughly and carefully</td>
<td>Mostly integrates and explains evidence to support the primary claim(s)</td>
<td>Uses some evidence, but may struggle to integrate it logically or smoothly into the argument, or to explain it fully</td>
<td>Does not use evidence, merely reports it without explanation, or plagiarizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arrangement</strong></td>
<td>Consistently uses sophisticated transitions to enhance the coherence of sentences and paragraphs</td>
<td>Mostly uses effective transitions to enhance the coherence of sentences and paragraphs</td>
<td>Simple transitions enhance the coherence of sentences and paragraphs</td>
<td>Does not use transitions, or sentence and paragraph arrangement interferes with logical coherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readability</strong></td>
<td>Sentences always mechanically correct and stylistically sophisticated; reader comprehension never impeded</td>
<td>Sentences almost always mechanically correct and stylistically clear; reader comprehension rarely and minimally impeded</td>
<td>Sentences usually mechanically correct and clear; reader comprehension occasionally impeded, though not critically</td>
<td>Mechanically incorrect or stylistically unclear sentences critically impede reader comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Level Correctness and Style</strong></td>
<td>Sentences always mechanically correct and stylistically sophisticated; reader comprehension never impeded</td>
<td>Sentences almost always mechanically correct and stylistically clear; reader comprehension rarely and minimally impeded</td>
<td>Sentences usually mechanically correct and clear; reader comprehension occasionally impeded, though not critically</td>
<td>Mechanically incorrect or stylistically unclear sentences critically impede reader comprehension</td>
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### SAGES Writing Rubric – Terminology

**Engagement** – SAGES pushes students to engage with current research and thinking about a wide range of topics. In each writing assignment, students should thoroughly understand – and be able to explain – the central question, problem, or idea that motivates their written work. At its root, this category assesses how well a paper performs the task(s) laid out in the assignment; but good, persuasive writing should be compelling to a smart reader who may not know the specifics of the assignment prompt. So, a proficient writer will provide necessary context in a compelling and audience-aware way.

- **Content/Ideas** assesses the relevance and significance of the paper’s central insight(s). There are many words that can define our expectations for engagement of a problem/question—thorough, careful, creative—but we have found that words like “insightful,” “significant,” and “original” can be helpful in pushing students to go beyond what they read or discussed in class and their old habits of information retrieval in order to begin doing the kind of independent thinking that characterizes college work.
- **Purpose, Context, and Audience** assesses the writer’s ability to engage respectfully with diverse perspectives and to present her/himself as a credible and persuasive voice on the topic. **Purpose:** Is the writer able to express the motivation for writing? **Context:** Does the writer frame the essay’s ideas such that the reader can locate them in a broader conversation? **Audience:** Does the writer correctly assume what readers should know and properly introduce what they do not? Does the writer acknowledge other points of view, especially ones that may conflict with the writer’s?

**Argument** – SAGES asks students not only to engage with questions/problems, but also to respond with persuasive and valuable answers and solutions. This category assesses students’ abilities to present their contributions in the forms of clearly stated and thoroughly developed arguments. The proficient writer will articulate a strong, precise, and insightful thesis that governs the development of the paper.

- **Thesis Statement** assesses the clarity and precision of the governing statement. It is possible for a student to write a great piece without an explicit thesis statement, but it’s so hard for student writers to do so that we encourage them to use one. The thesis is the one-sentence (even if it technically uses more than one) version of the piece. It governs everything that gets said in it, telling the writer (and reader) what should be included (and left out), as well as suggesting the order in which information will be presented.
- **Reasoning/Development** assesses the depth and nuance of the argument throughout the paper. Do the claims made in the body of the piece link back to the thesis? Is each claim logically persuasive (i.e., does the writer establish premises first, then logically build toward reasonable conclusions)? Does the writer push the ideas presented to go deeper into them, beyond the obvious or superficial? You may note that there is some overlap here with ENGAGEMENT. One way to think about the difference: a writer may ENGAGE an insight through a flash of brilliance, but it is how thoroughly and well the writer develops that idea that should determine the grade for ARGUMENT.

**Evidence** – SAGES introduces students to a range of evidence and teaches them to evaluate and make use of credible, persuasive information in their writing. This category assesses students’ abilities to identify appropriate (often scholarly) evidence to support their arguments, as well as their abilities to accommodate and use potentially discrepant data or contradictory ideas.

- **Quality** assesses the relevance and reliability (for researched arguments, the gold standard of reliability is peer-reviewed scholarship) of the evidence used. Evidence refers not only to secondary sources, but also anything that could be used to support a claim, including observational data or personal experience.
- **Use** assesses the way the writer integrates information into her/his argument. Is the evidence presented necessary and sufficient to support the claim(s)? How is evidence introduced, analyzed, and incorporated into the writer’s text? Typically, the logical relationship between evidence and claim is not self-evident and thus must be stated explicitly through an explanatory sentence (often called a warrant).

**Readability** – SAGES teaches students to attend to the mechanics and style of their written performances. This category assesses papers on their “surface” features, including mechanical correctness and artful style.

- **Arrangement** assesses the paper’s coherence (sometimes called “flow”) and its intentional structure and wording. Although arrangement might refer to the order of paragraphs, it also refers to the transitions used between paragraphs, as well as the inclusion and order of sentences within them. So for example, if a paragraph begins with a non-sequitur, but then introduces an evidence-supported claim that logically links back to the thesis, we might say that the point is argued logically, but that the paragraph is not yet as readable as it could be.
- **Sentence Level Correctness and Style** assesses the paper’s technical consistency. This criterion refers to what many graders call “grammar,” but what linguists would refer to as a writer’s control of “Standard Edited English.” For mechanics and correctness, consider persistent patterns of error and errors that interfere with comprehension to be most serious.
TO: CWRU Writing Faculty
SUBJECT: SAGES Writing Portfolio Assessment Committee Report
DATE: 17 August 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2015 SAGES Writing Portfolio Assessment Committee, consisting of 11 faculty members from across the university, read and evaluated 854 student portfolios submitted to SAGES between May 2014 and May 2015.

The committee found that 68% of students’ portfolios were Proficient or Acceptable, the two highest performance categories on the rubric. The committee’s major finding was that students continue have difficulty making clear and persuasive arguments. Aspects of argument writing necessitating further instruction include: articulating a clear thesis statement, developing the argument throughout the paper, and using secondary source materials persuasively as evidence.

Overall, the committee felt that the problems students displayed in using evidence are directly linked to the difficulties they had with articulating and sustaining a clear argument. In other words, students do not perceive their own argument with enough complexity to merit a more sophisticated use of sources. Therefore, the committee recommends a stronger programmatic emphasis on the genre and purposes of the researched argument essay, its function in an academic community, and its relationship to the SAGES Learning Outcomes.

Committee members made specific recommendations to seminar leaders, as follows:

- Instructors should include the SAGES Learning Outcomes on their syllabi and emphasize them more in class to students. Instructors should particularly emphasize their direct correlation to researched argument writing.
- Instructors should spend more time on instructing students how to write appropriate thesis statements. The committee recommended providing students with more thesis statement models in order to make the expectations more explicit.
- More instructors should consider using sequenced writing assignments leading to the researched argument; for example, annotated bibliographies promote fuller understanding of—and more sophisticated engagement with—secondary sources.
- As noted by last year’s committee, more instructors should employ the Writing Program’s recommended writing texts for First and University Seminars respectively, They Say/I Say (Graff and Birkenstein) and The Craft of Research (Booth, Colomb, and Williams) to promote persuasive rhetorical moves and their relationship to the effective use of evidence.
- Instructors might want to consider bringing example student research papers into the seminar in order to illustrate proficient critical writing skills in researched argumentation.
- In collaboratively-taught seminars, both faculty should emphasize the importance of writing in their fields and work more closely together to teach argumentative writing. Lead instructors should not leave writing instruction solely up to the writing instructor and writing instructors should take a larger role in assisting them with strengthening their writing pedagogy.

The full report is available at http://www.case.edu/writing.

The 2015 SAGES Writing Portfolio Assessment Committee: Eric Chilton (English), Georgia Cowart (Music), Colin Drummond (Engineering), Tina Howe (Religious Studies), Megan Swihart Jewell (English), Jane Marek (Nursing), Todd Oakley (Cognitive Science), Erika Olbricht (English), Vasu Ramanujam (Weatherhead), Jeffrey Ullom (Theatre), Timothy Wutrich (Classics)
First Seminar Overview
In the fall of the freshman year, each SAGES student enrolls in a First Seminar. The seminar’s defining feature is its small size: With enrollment limited to 17 students, every First Seminar promotes active engagement and discussion, allows students to learn from one another, and offers a vigorous introduction to academic inquiry. First Seminars have a topic of study, consistent with the Program’s general education mission, and they also involve instruction in academic writing. In addition to the topical First Seminars, SAGES also offers Foundations First Seminars and ESL First Seminars, which are designed to provide more direct writing support to students who need more experience and/or confidence in writing at the college level.

What is Directed Self-Placement (DSP)?
DSP empowers first-year students to select a seminar that best suits their needs as new college writers and thinkers. New students are provided with materials to help them make this decision, including descriptions of the courses available to them, a questionnaire about their writing and reading experience, and a writing sample that they self-assess with criteria provided to them.

How does DSP work in SAGES?
In order to facilitate DSP in the SAGES Program, we have implemented a new on-line placement process in which students read, write a response to the reading, assess that response according to specific criteria typical of First Seminar writing, and complete a questionnaire about their own reading and writing experiences before coming to college. The process encourages students to reflect on their needs as new college writers and to select from among First Seminar, Foundations First Seminar, or ESL First Seminar. Students are provided information about the three kinds of courses and have the opportunity to talk with administrators in the SAGES Program.

- Foundations First Seminars for students who need or want support while developing strong writing habits and acclimating to college-level writing;
- ESL First Seminars for students who need or want support acclimating to academic writing in English; or
- topical First Seminars for students who need or want to apply their writing to explore scholarly areas of interest.

The three kinds of First Seminars have the same learning objectives and meet the same requirements, but they each foster academic writing in a different environment.

Why is SAGES changing from its current placement process?
Research shows that incoming first-year students are adept at identifying their writing needs, and do so more accurately than traditional placement measures, such as standardized test scores and writing samples. In the past, SAGES placed students in First Seminars based upon these traditional measures, but we now know that these markers simply don’t give us enough information about students' writing skills and confidence in writing. Research also shows that students are more invested in a writing course that they have chosen for themselves, and their writing improves when they are confident and engaged in the course. Knowing this, SAGES sought a new placement process that would more accurately match each student with the kind of First Seminar that would benefit them the most.

What if students select a course that isn’t right for them?
The DSP materials have been designed carefully to assist students in selecting the First Seminar type that is best for them, and SAGES personnel are happy to speak with students about the choice if they feel that they need some assistance. But, the key to DSP is that students take responsibility for the decision, and the sense of agency that they get from doing so improves their confidence, skill level, and engagement with their First Seminar work. SAGES will honor students’ selections and assist students in acclimating to their chosen seminar.

How will you know whether DSP is working for SAGES and the students?
DSP is new to SAGES, but it is has been successfully employed by comparable institutions. Taking the lessons learned by these other universities, SAGES has developed a model for DSP that is suited to the particular needs of this unique program. In order to assess how the DSP process is working and to make necessary adjustments moving forward, SAGES will seek feedback from First Seminar teachers and students in the Fall.

Questions or concerns? Martha Schaffer, the Director of Foundational Writing, is happy to answer any questions you may have about the DSP process. If you or your students have concerns or questions, please contact her at mws94@case.edu or 216-368-2452.

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1 International students will not participate in the online DSP process for academic year 2015-2016 as we address logistics. These students will be placed by the ESL Director based on a writing sample. Domestic non-native English speakers will participate this year.
FALL 2015 WRITING PROGRAM CALENDAR
UPDATES AVAILABLE ONLINE: CASE.EDU/WRITING

WRITING PROGRAM STAFF MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Sept 18</td>
<td>ENGL 398 Staff Meeting (ENGL 398 instructors) – Guilford 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Oct 9</td>
<td>ENGL 398 Staff Meeting (ENGL 398 instructors) – Guilford 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Oct 9</td>
<td>WRC Staff Meeting (All TAs with WRC appointments, including ENGL 180 assignments) – Bellflower 102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Oct 23</td>
<td>Writing Program: Group Grading – Bellflower 102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Nov 6</td>
<td>ENGL 398 Staff Meeting (ENGL 398 instructors) – Guilford 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Nov. 20</td>
<td>ENGL Lecturer Staff Meeting – Guilford 323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon Dec 7</td>
<td>Spring 2016 Writing Program Orientation sessions – Location &amp; details TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WRITING PROGRAM PEDAGOGY SEMINARS (BELLFLOWER 207)

**Syllabus & Assignment Details available on Blackboard (“Case Writing Programs”)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Sept 4</td>
<td>Working with CWRU’s ESL Writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Sept 15</td>
<td>Assignment Design and Sequencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Sept 22</td>
<td>Grading and Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Sept 29</td>
<td>Classroom Activities that Support Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Oct 6</td>
<td>Syllabus Design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAGES PEDAGOGY SERIES

*Required of new full-time Lecturers and all graduate students working in SAGES; Strongly encouraged for all Writing Faculty*

- Tuesdays 12-1
- Topics & Location available: [http://sages.case.edu](http://sages.case.edu)

WRITING RESOURCE CENTER (BELLFLOWER HALL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Sept 1</td>
<td>WRC Opens for Consultations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Sept 25</td>
<td>WRC Workshop for Students: Beyond the 5-Paragraph Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Oct 30</td>
<td>WRC Workshop for Students: Considering the Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Nov 20</td>
<td>WRC Workshop for Students: Revision &amp; Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Dec 11</td>
<td>WRC Closes for the Semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAGES WRITING PORTFOLIO WORKSHOPS (BELLFLOWER HALL)

*In this hands-on workshop, students assemble their SAGES Writing Portfolios and draft their Reflective Essays. Portfolios are due the semester after completion of the second USEM: Nov 1 & Mar 1. Details: [http://sages.case.edu/2014/12/05/writing-portfolio/](http://sages.case.edu/2014/12/05/writing-portfolio/)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Oct 13</td>
<td>WRC Workshop for Students: Beyond the 5-Paragraph Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Oct 22</td>
<td>WRC Workshop for Students: Considering the Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon, Dec 7</td>
<td>WRC Workshop for Students: Revision &amp; Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Dec 11</td>
<td>WRC Closes for the Semester</td>
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CELEBRATION OF STUDENT WRITING (TINKHAM VEALE UNIVERSITY CENTER)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Dec 4</td>
<td>Writing Classes Strongly Encouraged to Participate; All are Encouraged to Attend (proposals due Oct 23)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Student Writing Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Dec 18</td>
<td>SAGES FSEM Essay Award Nominations Due (forms available: <a href="http://www.case.edu/writing">http://www.case.edu/writing</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Dec 18</td>
<td>SAGES USEM Essay Award Nominations Due (forms available: <a href="http://www.case.edu/writing">http://www.case.edu/writing</a>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ENGL Lecturer Professional Development Workshops (GUILFORD 223)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date, Time</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Aug 28, 4:15-5:45</td>
<td>CV Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri, Sept 4, 4:15-5:45</td>
<td>Cover Letter Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Sept 25, 4:15-5:45</td>
<td>Publication Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Oct 30, 4:15-5:45</td>
<td>Publication Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Nov 20, 4:15-5:45</td>
<td>Publication Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Dec 11, 4:15-5:45</td>
<td>Publication Workshop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### USEM Proposal Workshop & Deadlines (GUILFORD 323)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date, Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Sept 11, 4:15-5:45</td>
<td>For ENGL Lecturers &amp; Advanced ENGL Graduate Students who are preparing USEM Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon, Sept 21</td>
<td>ENGL Lecturer USEM Proposal Deadline (for Spring 2016)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SAGES Professional Development Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Oct 1</td>
<td>Grant Applications Due (forms available: <a href="http://www.case.edu/writing">http://www.case.edu/writing</a>) – grants available for full-time Lecturers who are not assigned a stand-alone FSEM in Fall 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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