Northern Illinois University
Office of Assessment Services

2008 University Writing Project Report
Analysis of College-Level Writing Ability/Skills
Fall 2008

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For Additional Information
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History of the Writing Project

Northern Illinois University has had a long history of interest in the writing abilities of its students. From writing samples used to place students appropriately in their first college-level English courses, to the external review of dissertations, the university invests a significant amount of time and resources into the process of analyzing student writing. A number of current college committees have a direct interest in student writing abilities as well; among these are the University Assessment Panel (UAP), the General Education Committee (GEC), and the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee (WACC).

One project that was established specifically to measure student writing ability was the Junior-Level Writing Project. The project began formally in 1999, and was first administered using a writing assessment tool developed by American College Testing (ACT). In 2000, the group of faculty and administration spearheading the project made the decision to administer future iterations of the project using an institutionally developed prompt rather than the generic prompt supplied in the standardized instrument. The prevailing thought was that students would prepare a better writing sample if the prompt had a universal theme that could evoke an invested personal response. The topic selected involved participants’ reasons for choosing their college major/degree. That prompt, with only minor modification/clarification was used until 2004.

The Junior-Level Writing Project was administered annually in the spring semester. Faculty volunteers were solicited by means of a call letter. Those agreeing to take part in the assessment were required to designate one 50-minute class period in which the assessment would be conducted. During that class session, materials were distributed, the prompt was read, and students were instructed to write for the remainder of the period. At the end of the session, materials were collected and returned to the university’s assessment coordinator. The writing samples were scored by personnel from the Department of English who were selected and trained by a scoring coordinator also from English. Scorers were given copies of the students’ writing samples with names, majors, and other pertinent information removed, which they scored using a standardized rubric. Each sample was read by two scorers; any discrepancies were resolved by a third reader. The quantitative scores were then collected and populated in a spreadsheet which was later transferred to the Office of Assessment Services (OAS), and score reports were issued, along with letters of score explanation, directly to the students. The scoring coordinator from the Department of English also evaluated the writing samples qualitatively; data were summarized in a series of written documents detailing common qualities and circumstances, as well as trends in writing content by major. When all of the information was received, the assessment coordinator produced a summary document to distribute to participating faculty and college and university administration.

In the first years of the Junior-Level Writing Project, faculty (and therefore student) participation was high. The results of these assessments consistently showed that students demonstrated a range of writing skills, with an average slightly below the desired criterion of 8 on a 12-point scale. Over the course of the project however, participation fell dramatically. In 2002, when the initial call letter was sent to faculty soliciting participation, there was a response rate of 0 percent. The OAS immediately began a calling campaign soliciting volunteers. The most common reasons given for non-participation in this project were the use of a class period for administering the assessment, and a lack of student engagement in the assignment. Based on this information, internal discussion of alternative methods to assess writing skills and abilities began. By spring 2003, the Junior-Level
Writing Project was offered only as a special administration to the College of Business, and was no longer offered campus-wide.

**Current University Writing Project**

As a result of on-going discussions and a search of the literature, it became evident that a redesign of the Junior-Level Writing Project was needed. The interest in students’ writing abilities was still present university-wide, but the need for more focused writing became evident. The ever present assessment question “What can the student DO?” became the central issue and was translated into the question of “Can NIU students write effectively and at the required level of proficiency for the positions they will obtain after graduation?” As the call for assessment at both state and federal levels continues to increase, this question has taken on greater meaning.

The Junior-Level Writing Project was redesigned into the University Writing Project which was piloted in spring 2004 and spring 2006. Working with faculty in the College of Business, the OAS engaged in a course-embedded writing assessment involving the review of required course assignments rather than a standardized writing prompt. The rationale for this pilot was rooted in the need to determine students’ ability to write effectively and proficiently in their majors. When students are engaged in course required writing projects for their major, they are more focused because their grades depend on the quality of the work they produce. Students’ ability to synthesize, express, and accurately apply the content they have learned in their courses has a direct relationship to their ability to produce and work in their field post-graduation. Hence, the students should be more engaged in the assessment. In addition, there is no need for faculty to dedicate a class period for the assessment because they are submitting pre-existing course-embedded assignments. Therefore, the revised assessment process addresses both student engagement and class time concerns previously raised by faculty.

The following protocol was followed for the revised assessment process piloted in spring 2004 and spring 2006:

1) Writing samples to be scored were obtained from courses in the major (junior-level or above). The course instructors selected the writing sample to be scored.

2) Writing samples were obtained from work already required in the selected course; no new assignments were required.

3) As the writing sample came from course-embedded work, there was no need to use a class period for project administration.

4) Writing samples were collected from the selected course instructor; 2 copies were made and the originals were returned directly to the instructor by the participating department/college. There was no maximum number of pages for any one writing sample; a minimum of three pages of text was required. Copied results were transferred to the OAS; the course and college of origin were clearly identified by cover sheet on each set of samples. All returned writing samples continued to be used as a part of the course requirements/assignments.

5) Obtained samples were cleaned of identifying information by the OAS, and scored (as before) by trained scorers selected from the Department of English. Coordination of the training and scoring process was done by faculty selected from the Department of English. The existing assessment rubric (utilized for the Junior-Level Writing Project) continued to be used. Scores obtained from the quantitative scoring process were entered in a spreadsheet, and results were transferred to the OAS for analysis. The qualitative review of writing samples was discontinued.
Results were tabulated by department and college in aggregate format. No distribution of scoring was made to participating students, but students were made aware of their individual scores and provided with a certificate for their participation.

The departmental writing samples were solicited during the months of April/May, and were turned over to the scoring unit in late May. Results from the scoring process were completed and submitted to the OAS by July of 2004 and 2006.

The final report of the pilot project was completed each year in the fall, with presentation of the report to the participating colleges and the Department of English. The final report was also made available to the UAP and other NIU bodies as needed.

After reviewing the results of the College of Business pilots of the University Writing Project, the General Education Committee decided that it would be beneficial to expand the project to the full NIU campus. The OAS expanded the 2007 University Writing Project to the whole campus with particular emphasis in the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Health and Human Sciences, and Engineering and Engineering Technology. These colleges were contacted concerning plans for the 2007 University Writing Project in the fall of 2006. The protocol that was followed for the revised assessment process piloted in spring 2004 and spring 2006 was also followed for spring 2007. A total of 12 faculty and 430 students from the Colleges of Business, Engineering and Engineering Technology, Health and Human Sciences, and Liberal Arts and Sciences participated in spring 2007.

In addition to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which will be targeted every year, greater emphasis was placed on recruiting participation from the Colleges of Business, Education, and Visual and Performing Arts in spring 2008. The focus on colleges that administer undergraduate degree programs will continue to rotate from year-to-year with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences being targeted every year along with two or three of the other five colleges.

**Analysis of College-Level Writing Ability/Skills: 2008 University Writing Project**

**Method**

Recruitment for the 2008 University Writing Project was yet again expanded to the whole campus, with particular emphasis in the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and Visual and Performing Arts. These colleges were contacted concerning plans for the 2008 University Writing Project in the fall of 2007. A total of 15 faculty and 426 students from the Colleges of Business, Education, Health and Human Sciences, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Visual and Performing Arts participated in spring 2008.

Results from the 2007 University Writing Project led to further review of the standardized assessment rubric that had been previously used to evaluate students’ writing samples. It was concluded that the assessment rubric in its current form was not broad enough to address the many different writing styles utilized within courses and colleges across the university. The Department of English created a more general writing rubric in fall 2007 with the intent of addressing these writing styles more comprehensively. The revised rubric consists of seven subscales in order to evaluate various writing styles more effectively and provide a way to identify areas of strength and weakness in student writing at the university, college, and course levels. The rubric was approved by faculty and administration within departments with more technical writing styles such as business, engineering, and math, and was piloted in spring 2008 (see Rubric at the end of this section).
The protocol that was followed for the revised assessment process was also followed for spring 2008, with the exception of the distribution of individual scores and certificates of participation to students. This decision was based on concerns expressed by some students over discrepancies in the grades awarded to them by their professors versus the scores they received in the University Writing Project. The completed writing samples were transferred to the scoring coordinator from the Department of English and were evaluated according to the revised assessment rubric developed by the department. Two independent scorers evaluated each paper, resulting in two types of scores: the computed-average of the two scorers, and a holistic score determined by both faculty. The scores were then entered into an Excel file for transmission to the OAS. Scores thus could range from 2 to 6. A score of 4 or better was considered ‘meeting expectations’. In comparing the two types of scores (computed-average and holistic scores), it was determined that the holistic scores followed the same pattern as the computed-average scores, but were consistently higher. To see a comparison of the computed-average and holistic scores, see Appendix A. For a more conservative analysis, only the computed-average scores were used in this year’s analyses.

Additional data were gathered from Registration and Records in the spring of 2008 in order to reexamine whether ACT scores, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and/or English grades could be used to predict students’ performance on the University Writing Project.
Department of English  
*General Writing Rubric*

The following criteria describe writing that *Meets expectations*:

**Focus:**  
The writing demonstrates adequate understanding of the writer’s task and establishes effective communicative intent.

- 3: Exceeds expectations  
- 2: Meets expectations  
- 1: Doesn’t meet expectations

**Genre:**  
The writing demonstrates satisfactory control of the conventions of the relevant discourse community.

- 3: Exceeds expectations  
- 2: Meets expectations  
- 1: Doesn’t meet expectations

**Audience:**  
The writing reflects consistent awareness of desired impact on audience and effectively appeals to audience expectations.

- 3: Exceeds expectations  
- 2: Meets expectations  
- 1: Doesn’t meet expectations

**Organization:**  
The writing demonstrates appropriate arrangement of material and provides sufficient material to satisfy expectations of readers.

- 3: Exceeds expectations  
- 2: Meets expectations  
- 1: Doesn’t meet expectations

**Critical Thinking:**  
The writing reflects adequate development, representation, and/or integration of ideas, experiences, or texts.

- 3: Exceeds expectations  
- 2: Meets expectations  
- 1: Doesn’t meet expectations

**Writer’s Presence:**  
The writing suggests an informed writer who establishes and maintains an appropriate voice, tone, and style.

- 3: Exceeds expectations  
- 2: Meets expectations  
- 1: Doesn’t meet expectations

**Presentation:**  
The writing shows control of sentence-level features of written language (grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage).

- 3: Exceeds expectations  
- 2: Meets expectations  
- 1: Doesn’t meet expectations
Results

Descriptive statistics examining students’ overall and subscore performance on the 2008 University Writing Project at the university, college, and course levels were conducted. A frequency distribution graphing students’ overall performance on the 2008 University Writing Project can be found in Figure 1. Scores from the two raters could range from 2 to 6; with scores of 2, 4, and 6 indicating the writing ‘did not meet’, ‘met’, or ‘exceeded’ expectations, respectively. The mean score for all students (N = 426) was 4.17 with a standard deviation of .983. A score of 4 or better, indicating writing expectations were met, was achieved by approximately 77 percent of the students who participated. Figures displaying frequency distributions separately by college and course levels can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively.

![Figure 1: Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores](image)


The mean score was also calculated for each of the colleges (see Figure 2) and courses (see Appendix D). Students in the College of Business had a mean score of 4.04 (N = 94) with a standard deviation of .994. A score of 4 or better, indicating writing expectations were met, was achieved by 71 percent of the students who participated from this college. The College of Education had a mean score of 4.50 (N = 64) with a standard deviation of .836. Ninety-eight percent of the students from the College of Education achieved a score of 4 or better. The College of Health and Human Sciences had a mean score of 4.19 (N = 67) with a standard deviation of .973. Seventy-eight percent of these students achieved a score of 4 or better. The Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Visual and Performing Arts had mean scores and standard deviations of 4.08 (N = 195) and 5.33 (N = 6), and .997 and .516, respectively. A score of 4 or better was met by 76 percent of the students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and 100 percent of the students in the College of Visual and Performing Arts.
This year’s rubric allowed for subscale distinctions to determine areas of strength and weakness within the writing samples. Seven subscales were identified: focus, genre, audience, organization, critical thinking, writer’s presence, and presentation. Expanded explanations of each subscale can be found in the rubric in the Methods section of this report. The mean score for each subscale was calculated at the university (see Figure 3), college (see Figure 4), and course levels (see Appendix E). Subscale score distributions by college can be viewed in Appendix F.
Focus: The writing demonstrates adequate understanding of the writer's task and establishes effective communicative intent.

Genre: The writing demonstrates satisfactory control of the conventions of the relevant discourse community.

Audience: The writing reflects consistent awareness of desired impact on audience and effectively appeals to audience expectations.

Organization: The writing demonstrates appropriate arrangement of material and provides sufficient material to satisfy expectations of readers.

Critical Thinking: The writing reflects adequate development, representation, and/or integration of ideas, experiences, or texts.

Writer's Presence: The writing suggests an informed writer who establishes and maintains an appropriate voice, tone, and style.

Presentation: The writing shows control of sentence-level features of written language (grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage).
Based on the subscale analyses (see Figures 3 and 4), all subscales except ‘presentation’ met or exceeded the level of expectancy (i.e., a score of 4 or more) at the university-level. Scores on the presentation subscale were below expected writing standards. Presentation is represented by basic features of written language such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, and word usage. At the college-level, presentation was similarly low, as it did not meet expectations in 3 out of the 5 participating colleges. Focus, organization, and writer’s presence subscales tended to be the highest, as they met expectations in all 5 colleges. The course-level data can be found in Appendix E. This data can inform future writing projects for individual courses.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using SPSS to determine if the mean scores in any of the colleges were significantly different from one another. Results showed that the mean score of students in at least one of the colleges was significantly different than the others, $F(4, 421) = 4.873, p = .001$. A Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that, on average, students from the College of Visual and Performing Arts and the College of Education scored significantly higher ($p = .05$) than students from the College of Business and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Student scores from the College of Health and Human Sciences did not significantly differ from any other college.

Using the data collected from Registration and Records (N=257), a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether cumulative grade point average (GPA), ACT composite scores (ACT), and last English grade predicted students’ performance on the University Writing Project. This regression was informed by last year’s University Writing Project data. Last year, exploratory analysis examined simple regressions for each variable (GPA, ACT, and last English grade) and all variables significantly predicted University Writing Project scores; with GPA, ACT, and last English grade accounting for 20, 10, and 5 percent of the variance in writing scores, respectively. Using this data, a hierarchical multiple regression was run with GPA entered in block 1, ACT entered in block 2, and last English grade entered in block 3.

The regression revealed significant results with GPA and ACT scores significantly predicting University Writing Projects scores, $F(3, 253) = 21.948, p = .000$. Last English grade was not a significant predictor (See Table 1). The three predictors accounted for approximately 21 percent of the variance in University Writing Project Scores. Specifically, cumulative GPA accounted for 12 percent of the variability, ACT scores accounted for 8 percent of the variability, and last English grade accounted for the remaining 1 percent. These results suggest that the higher one’s cumulative GPA and ACT score, the higher their score was on the University Writing Project.
Table 1

Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting University Writing Project Scores (N=257)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>GPA</td>
<td>.687</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td>5.772*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>.560</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.277</td>
<td>4.815*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>5.076*</td>
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<td>Step 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
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<td>.118</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>4.402*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.274</td>
<td>4.712*</td>
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<td>English Grade</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>1.741</td>
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</table>

Note. \( R^2 = .116 \) for Step 1; \( R^2 = .197 \) for Step 2; \( R^2 = .207 \) for Step 3; *p<.01, two-tailed.
Discussion

As with the 2007 University Writing Project (UWP), this year’s project sampled course-embedded writing assignments from the full NIU campus. As in the past, a team of trained scorers from the Department of English were enlisted to evaluate the writings. Unlike the 2007 project, a new streamlined General Writing Rubric was used in the evaluation of the 426 student writing assignments.

The results of the 2008 University Writing Project assessment indicate that although most students are demonstrating a writing ability at the designated standard, many are not and there is much room for improvement in students’ writing abilities. Specifically, improvements in writing ability across the university could be strengthened in the area of writing presentation (e.g., grammar, spelling, punctuation, and word usage). Although the average scores across the university for the other six writing areas met or exceeded expectations, there is still room for progress in the areas of focus, genre, audience, organization, critical thinking, and writer’s presence.

At the college level, there is a similar pattern with presentation subscores representing the lowest performance area in all five colleges participating in the UWP. However, there is great variability in the subscores across the five colleges in student performance. Any conclusion drawn from these results must be tempered with the caveat that the college samples were not randomly selected and, in some cases, may be too small to draw any sound conclusions. Nevertheless, the data point to areas of potential writing challenges for students that colleges may wish to explore further.

Additional data were gathered from Registration and Records in the spring of 2008 in order to determine whether ACT scores, cumulative grade point average, and/or English grades could be used to predict students’ performance on the University Writing Project. GPA and ACT scores were significant predictors of University Writing Project scores, but last English grade was not. As in the previous year, the three factors together accounted for approximately 21 percent of the variance in University Writing Project scores indicating that they are not reliable predictors. The finding that English grades accounted for only approximately 1 percent of the variance in University Writing Project scores also suggests that there may be several different writing styles within courses and colleges across the university that differ from the style of writing in students’ English composition classes. Grades on more recent writing assignments may be more reliable predictors for examination in future analyses.

The redesigned University Writing Project has provided many benefits and challenges to the assessment of student writing ability at NIU. The benefits include: an authentic assessment of students’ ability to write effectively and proficiently in their majors; students’ engagement in the writing assignment; and an appreciation by faculty that students’ writing ability is an ongoing developmental process that students must be supported in throughout their academic careers at NIU. The challenges in the administration of the University Writing Project include: providing student writing samples that genuinely reflect their abilities; increased participation in the writing assessment by faculty and students across campus; and ongoing assistance to students in the development of their writing abilities.

A call for participation in the 2009 University Writing Project has been issued by the OAS (see Appendix G). In an effort to further increase participation in the University Writing Project by
faculty and students across campus, the call for participation will be posted in the *Northern Today* and on the OAS website. Direct calls will be made to faculty members across campus to increase involvement in the upcoming assessment. Greater emphasis will be placed on recruiting participation from the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Engineering and Engineering Technology, and Health and Human Sciences in spring 2009.
APPENDIX A: Holistic and Computed-Average Score Comparison

![Comparison Between Holistic and Computed-Average Scores](image-url)
APPENDIX B: College-Level Frequencies of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

**College of Business**

Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative Paper Score</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

Mean = 4.04
Std. Dev. = 0.994
N = 94

**College of Education**

Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

<table>
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<th>Cumulative Paper Score</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

Mean = 4.5
Std. Dev. = 0.836
N = 64
College of Health & Human Sciences
Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores
College of Visual & Performing Arts

Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

Cumulative Paper Score

Frequency

Mean = 5.33
Std. Dev. = 0.516
N = 6
APPENDIX C: Course-Level Frequencies of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

**ANTH 416**

Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

Mean = 3.2
Std. Dev. = 1.304
N = 5

**ANTH 463**

Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

Mean = 3.89
Std. Dev. = 0.782
N = 9
ENGL 407

Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

Mean = 4.17
Std. Dev. = 1.043
N = 10

MGMT 468

Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

Mean = 4.04
Std. Dev. = .994
N = 94
TLCI 300

Frequency of 2008 University Writing Project Scores

Mean = 5.08
Std. Dev. = .862
N = 13
APPENDIX D: Mean Course-Level University Writing Project Scores

Mean 2008 University Writing Project Scores by Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Mean Paper Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 416 (N=5)</td>
<td>3.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTH 463 (N=9)</td>
<td>3.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMD 326A (N=67)</td>
<td>4.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVOL 331 (N=29)</td>
<td>4.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 407 (N=18)</td>
<td>4.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGMT 468 (N=94)</td>
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<td>PHYS 374 (N=9)</td>
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<td>PSYC 433 (N=52)</td>
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<td>THD 474 (N=6)</td>
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<td>TLEE 344 (N=51)</td>
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<td>TLCI 300 (N=13)</td>
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APPENDIX E: Mean 2008 UWP Subscales Scores by Course, Organized by College

Business

![Bar chart for Business courses]

Education

![Bar chart for Education courses]
Health & Human Sciences

![Bar chart for COMD 326A (N=67).]

Liberal Arts & Sciences

![Bar chart for ANTH 416 (N=5) and ANTH 463 (N=9).]
Liberal Arts & Sciences (continued)

![Bar chart showing mean subscale scores for different courses.](chart1.png)

**Course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>ENGL 331 (N=29)</th>
<th>ENGL 407 (N=18)</th>
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<td>ENGL 407</td>
<td>Meets</td>
<td>Meets</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 331</td>
<td>Doesn't meet</td>
<td>Exceeds</td>
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![Bar chart showing mean subscale scores for different courses.](chart2.png)

**Course**

<table>
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<th>Course</th>
<th>PHYS 374 (N=9)</th>
<th>PSYC 332 (N=50)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Meets</td>
<td>Meets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC 332</td>
<td>Doesn't meet</td>
<td>Exceeds</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Legend**

- Focus
- Audience
- Critical Thinking
- Organization
- Writer's Presence
- Genre
- Presentation
Liberal Arts & Sciences (Continued)

![Graph showing Mean Subscale Score for PSYC 410 (N=23) and PSYC 433 (N=52).]

- **Course**
  - PSYC 410 (N=23)
  - PSYC 433 (N=52)

- **Mean Subscale Score**
  - Doesn't meet
  - Meets
  - Exceeds

![Legend for different subscales: Focus, Audience, Critical Thinking, Genre, Organization, Writer's Presence, Presentation.]

Visual & Performing Arts

![Graph showing Mean Subscale Score for TH-D 474 (N=6).]
APPENDIX F: Subscale Score Distributions by College

College of Business

Distribution of Scores by Subscale

College of Business (N=94)
College of Education

Distribution of Scores by Subscale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>2 - Doesn't Meet</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 - Meets</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 - Exceeds</th>
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<td>Focus</td>
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<td>Genre</td>
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<td>Writer's Presence</td>
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College of Education (N=64)
College of Health & Human Sciences

Distribution of Scores by Subscale

- **Focus**: Percentage of Total Scores
- **Genre**: Percentage of Total Scores
- **Audience**: Percentage of Total Scores
- **Organization**: Percentage of Total Scores
- **Critical Thinking**: Percentage of Total Scores
- **Writer's Presence**: Percentage of Total Scores
- **Presentation**: Percentage of Total Scores

**College of Health & Human Sciences (N=67)**
Distribution of Scores by Subscale

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (N=195)
APPENDIX G: University Writing Project Guidelines

Introduction:
The University Writing Project (UWP) (formerly known as the Junior-Level Writing Project) was established in the mid-1990s to specifically measure the writing ability of NIU undergraduate students. The UWP has evolved into a course-embedded assessment of students' written assignments. The Office of Assessment Services (OAS) invites faculty from across the campus to participate in the project each year by submitting completed course assignments to the OAS for review by faculty from the Department of English using a standardized assessment rubric.

Benefits of the UWP to Faculty and Students:
The benefits of the UWP are numerous:

9) Faculty members have ongoing input into the writing assessments. The course instructors who participate in the UWP will select the writing sample to be scored.

10) Faculty members are not asked to assign additional written coursework or give up valuable class time to participate in the UWP. Writing samples are obtained from work already required in the selected courses and, as the writing sample will come from course-embedded work, there will be no need to use a class period for project administration.

11) Faculty members will receive valuable feedback on the writing abilities of their students. Samples will be scored by trained scorers selected from the Department of English and results will be tabulated by department and college in aggregate format by the OAS. These data may be used for ongoing program assessment and will contribute to the assessment of general education at NIU.

Faculty Participation:

Faculty choosing to participate in the UWP must agree to the following:

1. Faculty members will send a list of students’ names and Z-ID’s for each participating course to the OAS by February 20, 2009. These will be kept confidential.
2. Faculty members will send the instructions for the course assignment selected to the OAS to be shared with the English faculty evaluating the writing assignments by February 20, 2009. The maximum number of pages for any one writing sample is ten pages; a minimum if three pages of text is required.
3. Faculty members will send the student writing samples to the OAS no later than May 1, 2009 (these may be sent electronically or by hard copy).
4. Faculty will inform their students that course assignments will be submitted to the OAS for institutional, college, and program assessment.
5. Faculty will inform their students that the results of their individual assessments will remain confidential by the OAS and will not be shared with faculty, college administrators, or any other parties. Aggregated results will be made publicly available.

For more information, please contact Carolinda Douglass in the Office of Assessment Services at 753-7120 or by email at cdoug@niu.edu.