

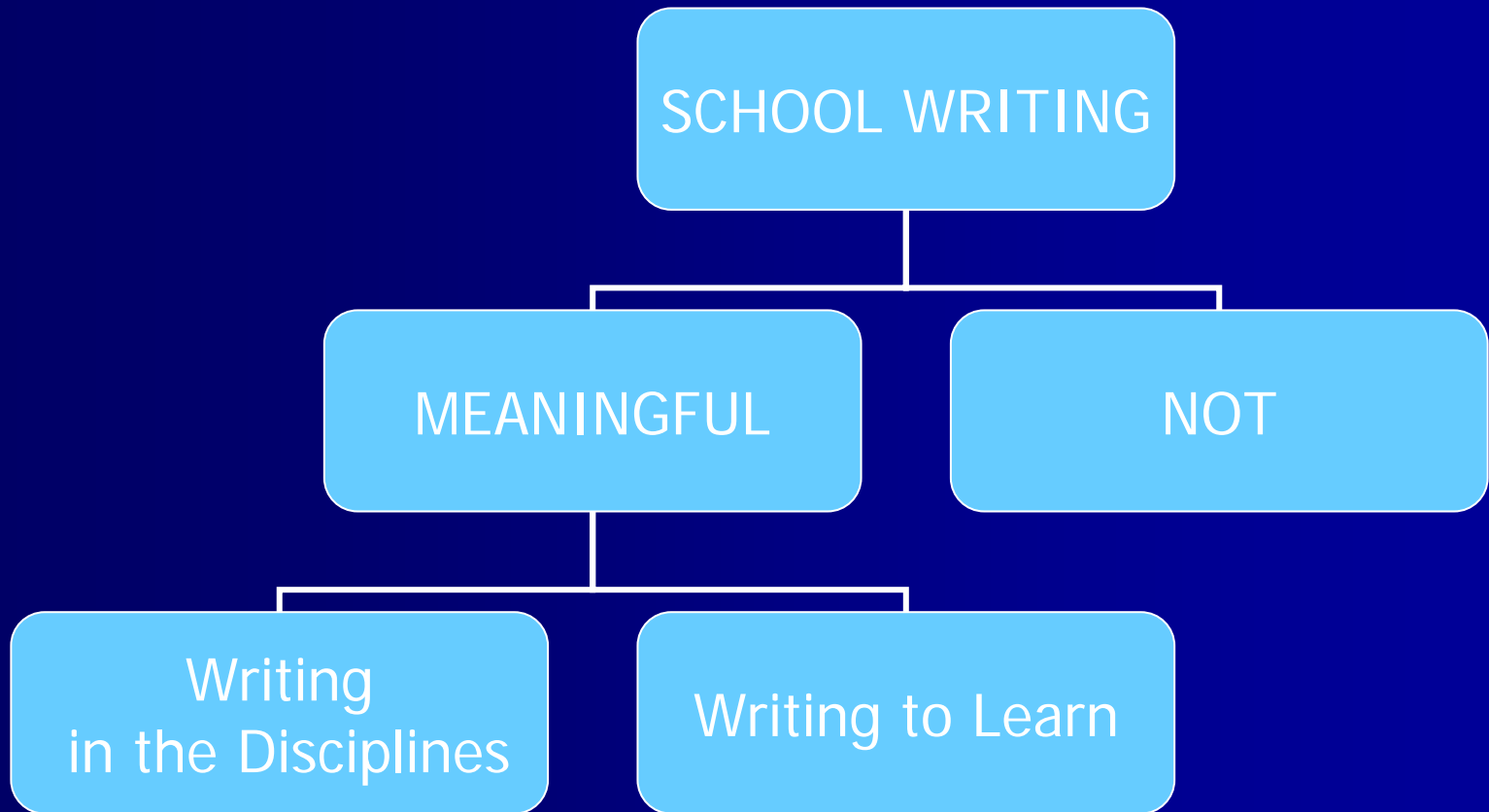
Writing and Writing-Intensive Courses

# **Transforming Undergraduate Writing: An Apprenticeship Approach**

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Transforming the Culture: Undergraduate Education and the Multiple  
Functions of the Research University  
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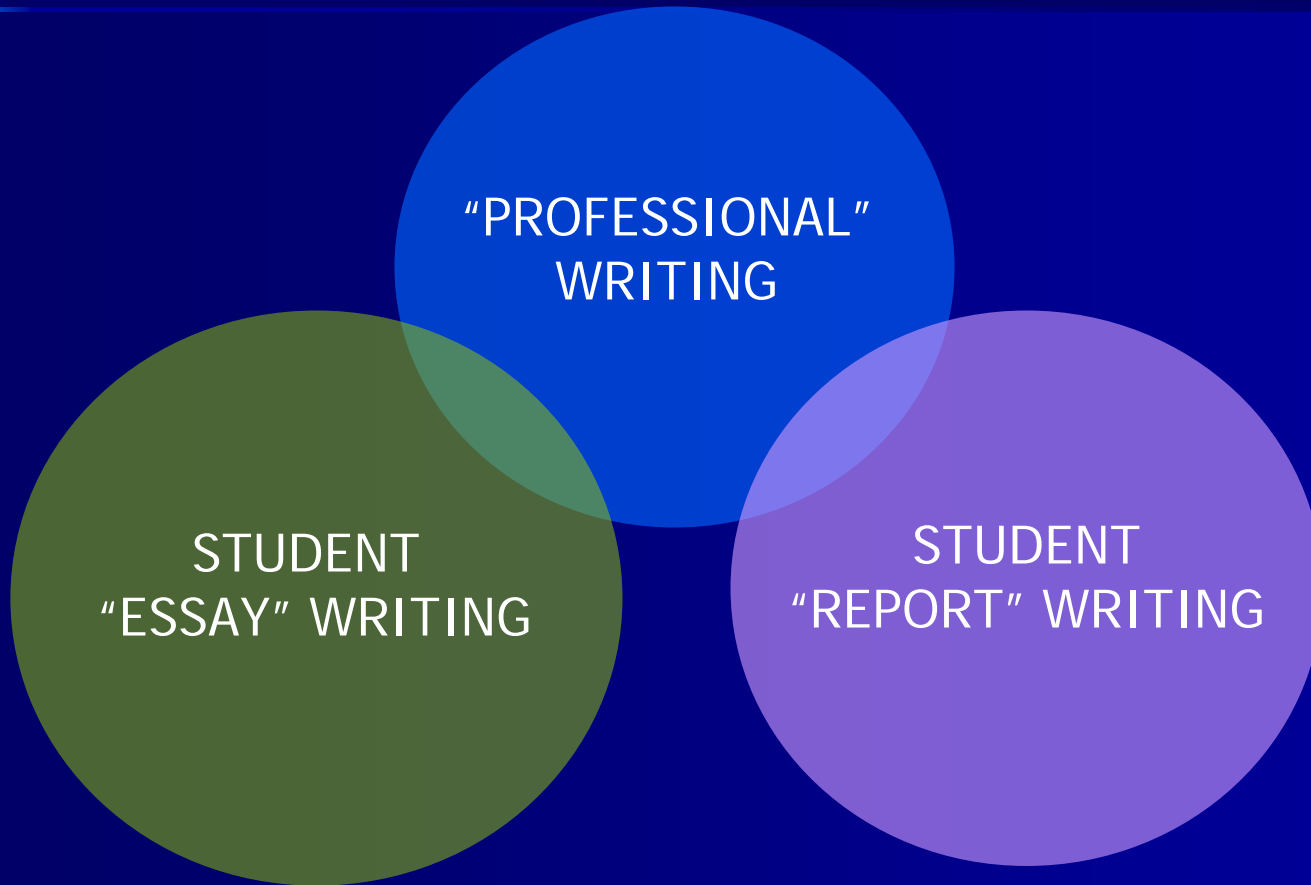
# School writing tasks



# What is WID?

- “Writing” is not “English”
- Teaching writing vs. teaching “English”
- How can experts in various fields contribute to students’ growth as writers?
- Synergy between writing and content instruction

# The apprentice model



A glimpse at some apprentice-type  
WID courses

# Dance

## Diaghilev Ballet: 1909-29

“The unique inquiry in dance is to learn to read movement as text, then translate motion into descriptive/analytic language. ...For much of dance history there is no moving image that researchers can refer to. ...The researcher must develop a skill in using verbal descriptions, drawings, paintings, photographs...”

# History

## Schools and Jim Crow

“The discipline of history uses a variety of written formats, including the original interpretive paper based on primary sources, the formal paper proposal, and the short but probing review. Students in this course will have the opportunity to write all three and learn how each plays a central role in the discipline—from the production of texts to the art of clear, concise writing.”

# Public Policy

## U.S. National Security Policy

“ [The] formal Policy Memorandum has two purposes. First, to broaden the writing experience... Second, to...have students experience how this type of document is commonly written and used in government policy and decision making.”

# Biology

## Altruism: The Biology of Mortality

“Students will reflect on their own writing and the writing of others through the revision of the grant proposal...

Grant writing is a very useful form for the development of scientific writing because it requires students to synthesize the primary literature as well as develop a critical test of a hypothesis.”

For more examples, see handout 1A

## Reading as an apprentice

Apprentice-oriented WID courses frequently use texts not only as sources of course content, but as writing models.

# Biology

## Biological Categories and Scientific Practice

“Students will read both critiques of the discipline as well as original research articles in the discipline to better understand the structure of argumentation and inference in the biological sciences.”

# Economics

## Economics of Personnel

“Writing in an applied microeconomics field is different than writing in other fields. Students will primarily learn about this type of writing by reading articles and discussing them in class. The instructor’s own work will be analyzed.”

# Public Policy

## U.S. National Security Policy

"Students will be exposed not only to important book-length arguments...but also contemporary scholarly articles in [philosophy], all of which will be discussed in relation to their respective rhetorical forms, styles and disciplinary purposes, as well as their philosophical content. Students will also study such specialized forms as the professional book review and conference paper, and they will be asked to produce their own pieces of writing modeled on these forms."

For more examples, see handout 1B

# Writing as an apprentice

Context may be *inside* or *outside* of the course proper

## CONTEXT: **INSIDE** THE COURSE

Students may be asked to approximate some type of writing done by those in the field.

# Example

## Public Policy

### U.S. National Security Policy

“Each student will research and write a ...formal Policy Memorandum on a major project ...The memorandum will address a topic relevant to national security policy....Your memorandum is written for a ranking policy maker such as the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, or National Security Advisor. [The policy memo] is a standard tool used in the decision making process in the State and defense Departments, the Intelligence agencies, and the National Security council...”

# Example

## Political Science

### American Foreign Policy

“Each student will be responsible for writing individually one foreign policy transition memorandum.... Students will present their arguments in briefings, and other students will be designated ‘first responders’ who will critique the proposal. Every student will do one briefing and serve one time as ‘first responder.’ For the purpose of this course, a briefing is a 10-minute pitch...to a foreign policy principal (me) in a senior policy team (the class).”

# Example

## Biology

### Topics in Advanced Animal Physiology

“The students will be given guidelines/ instructions as to how to properly write a scientific paper. [Both papers] will undergo a two-stage review and revision process: The first stage involving a formal review by their peers (other students in the class). ...The second stage will involve a written review of their papers by ‘journal editors’ (instructors)...”

## CONTEXT: **OUTSIDE THE COURSE**

Student work may be submitted for publication or forwarded to intended audience/stakeholders.

# Example

## Economics

### The E.U. in the Global Economy

“For the final project each student will write a review of a book dealing with one of the issues raised in the course. The student will revise the review over the course of several weeks and if it is good enough (and I expect all will be) will submit it to a scholarly journal for possible publication. Last spring five out of seven student in a seminar published their reviews in scholarly journals.”

See handouts 2A and 2B

# Example

## Public Policy

### Reporting Public Policy

“The final op-ed is a real-world exercise, and will be submitted by you, with an appropriately-worded cover letter, to the op-ed page of a news outlet of your choice. In the past, Duke students have had frequent success getting their op-eds published....The topic? Whether an elite college education is worth the cost in a shrinking job market.”

# Example

## Psychology

### Intervention with Adolescents

"Students in this course...will be assisting with a substance abuse prevention study at the Durham School for the Arts, part of which involves facilitating middle schoolers' creation of multimedia anti-drug presentations.

"Implementation evaluations assess the extent to which activities were executed as planned, provide feedback on the appropriateness or relevance of activities conducted, and identify variables which facilitated implementation or served as barriers...and suggest improvements or modifications which might be important if the program is disseminated to others."

## TASK 1:

Thinking about apprentice-oriented assignments as student and teacher

Political Science

Ethics of International Relations

See handouts 3A, 3B and 4A

## **TASK 2:**

What types of writing in your fields are a good fit for “apprentice” writing assignments?

See Handout 4B

## With the members of your group:

1. Assign someone in the group to be:

### MODERATOR

Keep the group on task and on time

### SECRETARY

Keep notes for reporting back to the larger group

## With the members of your group:

2. Make a list of the types of texts written by scholars or professionals in your fields.

Consider both public and working documents.

## With the members of your group:

3. Identify those types that you can readily imagine assigning as a student project.

Why do these seem like a good fit?

## With the members of your group:

4. Identify those types that you cannot readily imagine assigning as a student writing project.

Why do these seem like a poor fit?

# DISCUSSION

# Questions/tensions

- What kinds of writing will students be doing after graduation?
- What is the value of practice in scholarly forms of writing?
- What is the value of students learning to write in a field that they do not pursue?
- How should levels of student preparation influence the types of writing that might be assigned?

# SESSION OUTPUT

- What are the main ideas we want to forward from this session?
- What sorts of work would we like to encourage?
- What sorts of work would we like to discourage?
- What is needed to support good apprentice-model written work?

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# Interdisciplinary WID courses

- Some of our WID courses take a comparative approach to disciplinarity
- Tend to be offered in interdisciplinary programs

INT DISC

## Public Policy

## Urban Policy

“Students are assigned a broad array of readings by economists, political scientists, sociologists, historians, and other urban scholars. ...The nature of the assignments requires students to generate and interpret primary source evidence in manners associated with each of these disciplines.”

INT DISC

# American and African American Studies

## Race in American History

"[S]tudents will read...4-5 seminal texts on the subject of race from the fields of history, cultural studies, literature, and sociology. The object in part is to study and assess different kinds of source materials and how knowledge is often differently constructed, based on the field of inquiry."

INT DISC