ASSESSMENT NEWS

Department of English, Literature + Reading | Wilbur Wright College

Teaching Audience: Democratizing + Demystifying Academic Writing

by Anndrea Ellison

Students arrive in my classroom having experienced academic writing as a strange and complicated thing. I imagine they approach writing school papers like trying to conquer the last level of Donkey Kong: mashing buttons really fast while not really seeing the connection between what they are doing and what is successfully defeating a monster. One early intervention, then, is to demystify the academic audience and democratize the strategies that will successfully address it.

[T]eaching audience can… make students more confident writers and critics by leveling the hierarchal value placed on the academic audience.

One commonly used book for college writing, *They Say/I Say* is helpful to address those strategies more specifically, but I want to focus on the concept of audience itself. One benefit to teaching audience is that students become more familiar with the skills needed to address the academic audience's expectations. However, teaching audience can also make students more confident writers and critics by leveling the hierarchal value placed on the academic audience.

I want students to understand that each audience has specific reasons for the expectations it demands. For example, the academic audience requires an organizational structure because a clear structure makes ideas easier to identify and evaluate. When students begin to understand the connection between what an audience values and what specific rhetorical strategies an audience expects from them, they become more confident about creating texts that answer those expectations and demanding that others address their own expectations.

Continued on page 2.

Purpose + Audience | The ELR Definition

In continuation of its work from 2014-2015, this academic year, the Department of English, Literature and Reading (ELR) will continue the process of enhancing its exit process for English 101 so that it best reflects its commitment to assessing student learning; assuring critically reflective practice among instructors and students; and promoting professional development and the regular exchange of teaching strategies.

In 2015-2016, Wright College has shifted its assessment focus to the second of the General Education student learning outcomes, which focuses on academic communication that meets the expectations of diversely constituted audiences. Significantly, the criteria ELR uses to assess critical essays in English 101 include purpose and audience, specifically, assessing the degree to which students demonstrate competency in adopting consistently and appropriately the voice, tone and level of formality customary in academic writing.

This fall, we drafted a department-relevant definition of purpose and audience using the ELR department mission and student learning outcomes, both of which can be found **here**. Additionally, we used the **CCCC Statement on the Multiple Uses of Writing**; **NCTE's Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing**; and, **WPA's Revised First-Year Composition Outcomes**. Finally, ELR Assessment Committee members completed a survey and engaged in discussion regarding the connections between the theory and practice of teaching purpose and audience within the context of first-year composition program in an urban, diversely-constituted community college.

The ELR definition of purpose + audience is provided below.

Purpose *and* ***audience*** *are contextual and interdependent. They are both conceptual categories of which writers must be aware in order to write competently in academic, professional and personal contexts.*

Purpose relates to the development of a critical awareness of and intellectual curiosity about multiple rhetorical contexts; the formulation of and critical thought about a variety of topics; and, the employment of multiple adaptive and situational strategies in order to achieve the objectives of the writing task.

Audience relates to the development of a critical recognition of the relationship between writer and reader; the diversity of perspectives, values and assumptions of readers; and, the writer's membership in multiple, diversely constituted readerships in order to make sophisticated claims using reliable evidence and to produce progressive discourse for an academic audience.

nota bene: Special thanks to the ELR Assessment Committee, namely, Professors Anndrea Ellison, Bill Marsh, Bridget Roche, Julia Cohen, Suzanne Sanders, Tara Whitehair, Valerie Pell and Vincent Bruckert for their work on developing and reviewing the definition above.

Circling the Track | Why I Return to Rubrics

by Valerie Pell

For quite some time now, I've been in a debate with myself about rubrics. For every constructive reason I find to use them, there's another that's not. Like a runner, I circle the track, and I generally end up where I started. Despite their flaws, rubrics can be useful tools both for my students and me, so I tend to use them.

At that moment, Tracy had an epiphany; if she had used the rubric to self-assess her paper before submitting it, and if she would have used the rubric to guide revisions, she would have received a much higher grade.

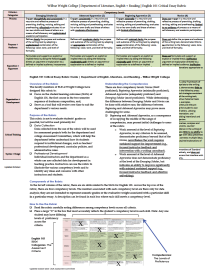
Last summer, I taught an English 101-197 course at Harold Washington, which essentially is a regular 101 course with a supplementary component for students who have borderline college-level readiness in reading or writing. A student of mine, Tracy, came into my office puzzling over the low grade she received on her first writing assignment. We looked at her finished work, the comments on it, and the completed rubric. At that moment, she had an epiphany; if she had used the rubric to self-assess her paper before submitting it, and if she would have used the rubric to guide revisions, she would have received a much higher grade. Even though students workshopped their papers in class using the rubric as a discussion point, using it on her own hadn't "clicked" for Tracy. By the time the second major assignment came around, she was ready not only to use the rubric to guide her own writing practice, but also to guide the focus when visiting the Writing Center. From that point on, she received As on her papers.

While rubrics are great to demystify my expectations for students, I often use rubrics to do the same for me…[but] there are some negatives…

While rubrics are great to demystify my expectations for students, I often use rubrics to do the same for me. Whenever I'm developing new assignments or curriculum—like many of us are doing with ARC courses right now—I'm not always exactly sure what it is I want to measure when assessing students: I'm not sure what exactly I'll cover with a particular skill or topic; how I'm going to teach a topic; the value I'll place on different aspects of an assignment; how long it will take to complete; or how students will respond.

Continued on pages 4 and 5.

Updated English 101 Critical Essay Rubric + New Guide Document



Spring 2015 was the *first* iteration of departmental assessment of first-year composition students with an instrument designed to determine how well students were achieving the learning outcomes of the course without evaluating their fitness to pass the course. With thoughtful questions and feedback about user-experience feedback and the hard work of the ELR Assessment Committee, the language of the rubric has been updated for greater clarity and consistency across competency levels. Additionally, the committee developed a guide document, which provides information on the objectives, purpose, and components of the rubric, as well as key information on differentiating the competency levels and using the rubric effectively. *See pages 6 and 7 for more information. Printed copies are located in the rear of the ELR department office, L323; digital copies are available from English 101 Cohort Chairs or from the department's assessment coordinator at* hdoss@ccc.edu.

When students begin to understand the connection between what an audience values and what specific rhetorical strategies an audience expects from them, they become more confident about creating texts that answer those expectations and demanding that others address their own expectations.

"Teaching Audience," Ellison cont.

I have developed an assignment that requires them to make these connections between the values of an audience and specific communication strategies that address those values. I ask them to write a 2-3 page essay, with two revisions, analyzing their own representation to one audience in their lives. Since I assign this essay at the beginning of the course, the objectives focus on making use of pre-writing through organizing quantity and quality of ideas, rather than objectives that come later in the course, such as an easily identifiable thesis statement and structural clarity.

In class, we work on listing the audiences in their lives, the ways we can represent ourselves to those audiences, and identifying the value connected with our behavior. For example, we decide that most of us would not curse in front of our grandmothers because she values manners. These connections are difficult for them to make at first, but once we go through a few example, they understand. This work helps them abstract from something they already know very well to the concept of adapting to our audience. A follow-up assignment is to identify the values represented by the requirements for one of their formal essays. Why do I require them to write 2-3 pages? Include quotes from the readings? Create a thesis statement? Once they begin to see these as values that can be addressed by the elements of writing, the requirements become both more urgent and more fluid.

When the academic audience becomes one among many, it loses its sacred status. To teach the concept of academic writing as responding to a particular audience is to encourage students to appreciate the myriad audiences in which they participate. My hope is that once students see audiences as equal in worth, they gain not only a greater ease with academic writing but also a respect for the expectations they have of others.

For more details about the ideas and the assignment featured here, please contact Anndrea Ellison, aellison9@ccc.edu.

English 101 Student Learning Outcomes Criteria | Definitions

In the process of evaluating the data from the spring 2015 departmental English 101 assessment, it became clear that one of the factors influencing the use of the Critical Essay Rubric was the differences among the instructors' definitions of the criteria for assessment. As a department, in 2014-2015, we had undergone a rigorous process of defining at least one of the criteria, i.e., critical thinking, but we had not done the same kind of work for the other six criteria.

Thus, using the same resources consulted for defining purpose and audience, the ELR Assessment Committee defined the remaining criteria in order to provide guidance to instructors teaching English 101 and using the rubric. Additionally, the committee used the process of defining the criteria for assessment in English 101 in order to think deeply about the assessable skills and habits of mind, which support them, within the context of English 101 and to consider further, more profound and learning-centered changes to the departmental approach to assessing learning in first-year composition. This work is ongoing.

Below, please find the "working" definitions for process, exposition, argument, organization, development, critical thinking, syntax, and usage. Your suggestions, questions and other forms of feedback are welcome.

Process refers to the materials a writer generates to develop a piece of writing over time. These materials may include evidence of prewriting, outlining, drafting, work-shopping, revising, editing, and proofreading. These kinds of recursive practices help students develop sophisticated and effective written communication through self-assessment.

Exposition refers to composition that demonstrates a detailed understanding of a concept using rhetorical analysis to examine the many facets of the concept in a clear way that enables a reader to understand it.

Argument refers to composition that demonstrates a detailed understanding of a concept using sound reasoning, evidence, and analysis to support a reasonable claim that assumes a clear and decisive position with regard to a topic. A strong argument includes: awareness of opposing views and avoidance of logical fallacies.

Organization and Development, though separate competencies, both require students to use logic and demonstrate how ideas connect, relate, and build.

> **Organization** refers to the ability to identify related central ideas; focus these ideas into paragraph form, keeping similar ideas together; avoid digressions and information that is not relevant; and demonstrate logical progression of ideas, with use of transitions that help the reader understand how ideas, explanations, details and examples connect, relate, and build from one another.
>
> **Development** refers to the ability to logically and sufficiently advance and support these central ideas using relevant and effective details, examples, and explanations, while avoiding generalization and vagueness.

Critical thinking is the process of dialoging with and identifying patterns in texts; reflecting on and questioning one's own assumptions and those of others; and communicating clearly while thinking deeply and logically. A well-practiced critical thinker engages in a transformative process of assessing information through analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Critical thinking encourages creative exploration, civic engagement as well as academic and professional competence.

Syntax and **usage** refers to competency at the sentence level, which creates emphasis and clarity as well as reveals a distinctive writer's voice and tone. These competencies are demonstrated by the accurate and appropriate use of grammar and punctuation as well as a variety of sentence structures and academic vocabulary.

Reading Corner: Books on Teaching + Assessment — Composition, Feminist Practice + Assessment

Below, please find one text that engages in and continues the conversation about the assessment of student learning within the context of teaching composition and feminist pedagogy. If you review this text or have read it previously, please send me a quick note about its value and limitations.

> *Repurposing Composition* by S. Stenberg (Utah State UP, 2015).

From *Amazon*, "In *Repurposing Composition*, Shari J. Stenberg responds to the increasing neoliberal discourse of academe through the feminist practice of repurposing. In doing so, she demonstrates how tactics informed by feminist praxis can repurpose current writing pedagogy, assessment, public engagement, and other dimensions of writing education. Stenberg disrupts entrenched neoliberalism by looking to feminism's long history of repurposing "neutral" practices and approaches to the rhetorical tradition, the composing process, and pedagogy. She illuminates practices of repurposing in classroom moments, student writing, and assessment work, and she offers examples of institutions, programs, and individuals that demonstrate a responsibility approach to teaching and learning as an alternative to top-down accountability logic. *Repurposing Composition* is a call for purposes of work in composition and rhetoric that challenge neoliberal aims to emphasize instead a public-good model that values difference, inclusion, and collaboration."

"Circling the Track," Pell cont.

I blamed them; obviously, they were not trying. Then I blamed myself; obviously, I lost my "touch" as an instructor. After dealing too many hands of this poisonous contest, I decided to enlist the rubric data's…Sure enough, an answer was there.

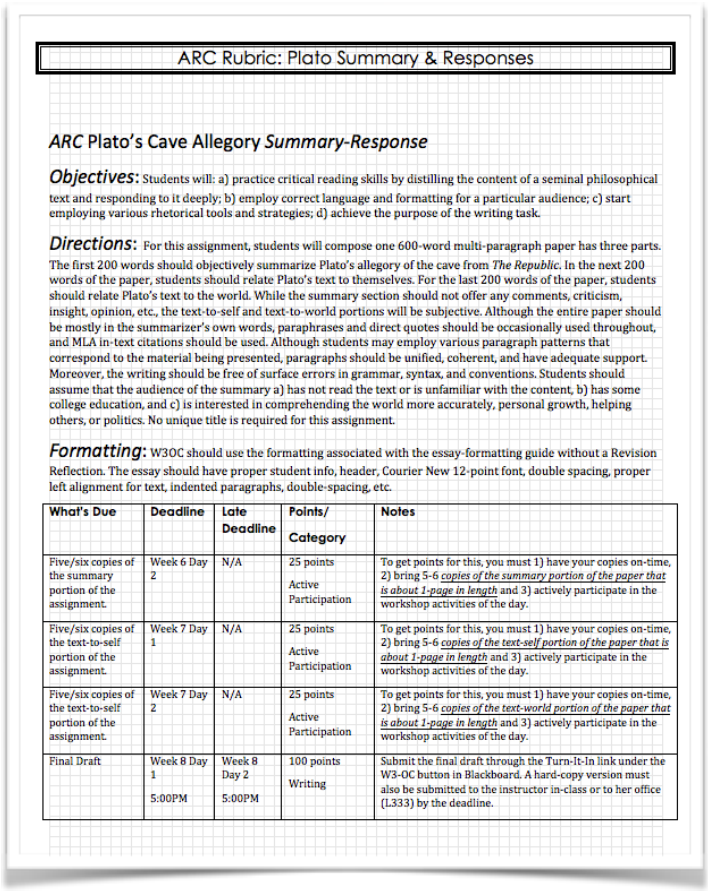
The data rubrics provide can also be a useful tool to better understand my classes and improve my teaching practice. A few semesters ago, I taught an extraordinarily challenging section of English 98. Exit Exam season was upon us, and I couldn't understand why the students were still so far from being ready for English 100, which resulted in me playing the "blame game." I blamed them; obviously, they were not trying. Then I blamed myself; obviously, I lost my "touch" as an instructor. After dealing too many hands of this poisonous contest, I decided to enlist the rubric data's help. Sure enough, an answer was there. Upon entering the course, more than half the students scored in the 40% range on the rubric. Most students were now in the 60% range. Few students can make 15-20% gains in a semester; to expect 30-40% gains was Pollyanna at best. These students were learning. Many of them had made tremendous gains. Obviously, it wasn't the students or me. Obviously, it was eWrite.

Despite these positive anecdotes about rubrics, there are some negatives that I can offer: rubrics stifle creativity; not everything is measurable; standardized and consistent assessment of student writing is a fairly mythological creature; planning for every possible variable of potential writing is impossible; rubrics are time consuming to develop and to use; interpreting data takes time, and guilt sometimes sets in if the data goes unused; and the most important one of all, most students don't actually pay attention to a rubric if you give them one. Ah! But there it is. When I remember Tracy, I circle back to where I began, deciding they're worthwhile to use.

Explanation of Assignment with Rubric

Assignment: The following is a Summary-Response assignment I developed for my ARC course this semester in the manner that I described above. This is the second formal summary writing assignment, so I developed the assignment to build off of where we had been, and increase its complexity and difficulty; namely, I had them attempting to engage deeply and meaningfully with a more difficult text.

Rubric: I gave students the assignment directions, but they didn't get the rubric right away. I wanted to make sure the rubric would have the components that we talked about in class in terms of what I was calling "deep engagement." I developed a handout for them about this topic, and we looked at samples that I created that were deep, had potential for depth, or superficial. We also looked at a previous assignment where I had them responding to a text without any instruction about doing so in a deep, meaningful way. This allowed them to see where they were and then attempt to improve upon it. When the rubric was completed, I gave it to students well before the final draft was due. We didn't seem to need to discuss it much because it seemed right in-line with where we had been.



ARC Rubric: Plato Summary & Responses

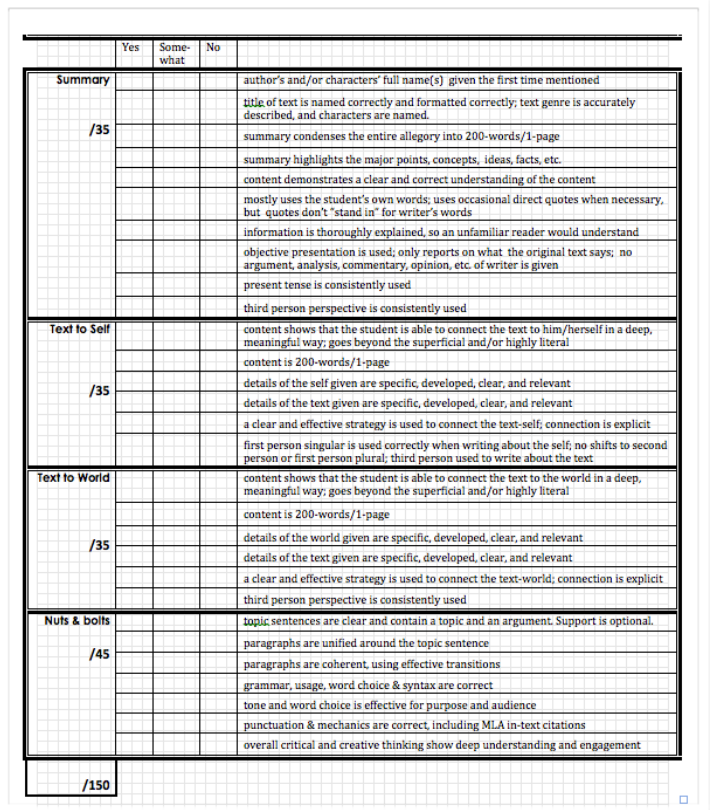
ARC* Plato's Cave Allegory *Summary-Response

***Objectives*:** Students will: a) practice critical reading skills by distilling the content of a seminal philosophical text and responding to it deeply; b) employ correct language and formatting for a particular audience; c) start employing various rhetorical tools and strategies; d) achieve the purpose of the writing task.

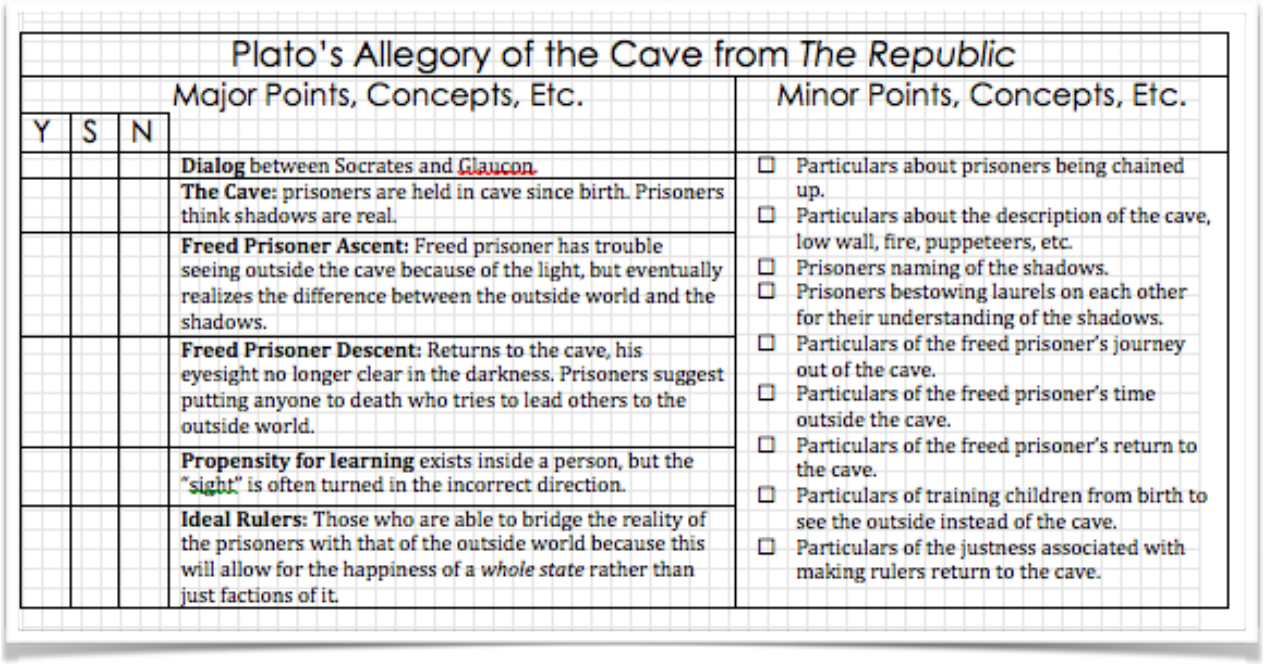
***Directions*:** For this assignment, students will compose one 600-word multi-paragraph paper has three parts. The first 200 words should objectively summarize Plato's allegory of the cave from *The Republic*. In the next 200 words of the paper, students should relate Plato's text to themselves. For the last 200 words of the paper, students should relate Plato's text to the world. While the summary section should not offer any comments, criticism, insight, opinion, etc., the text-to-self and text-to-world portions will be subjective. Although the entire paper should be mostly in the summarizer's own words, paraphrases and direct quotes should be occasionally used throughout, and MLA in-text citations should be used. Although students may employ various paragraph patterns that correspond to the material being presented, paragraphs should be unified, coherent, and have adequate support. Moreover, the writing should be free of surface errors in grammar, syntax, and conventions. Students should assume that the audience of the summary a) has not read the text or is unfamiliar with the content, b) has some college education, and c) is interested in comprehending the world more accurately, personal growth, helping others, or politics. No unique title is required for this assignment.

***Formatting*:** W3OC should use the formatting associated with the essay-formatting guide without a Revision Reflection. The essay should have proper student info, header, Courier New 12-point font, double spacing, proper left alignment for text, indented paragraphs, double-spacing, etc.

What's Due	Deadline	Late Deadline	Points/ Category	Notes
Five/six copies of the summary portion of the assignment.	Week 6 Day 2	N/A	25 points Active Participation	To get points for this, you must 1) have your copies on-time, 2) bring 5-6 *copies of the summary portion of the paper that is about 1-page in length* and 3) actively participate in the workshop activities of the day.
Five/six copies of the text-to-self portion of the assignment.	Week 7 Day 1	N/A	25 points Active Participation	To get points for this, you must 1) have your copies on-time, 2) bring 5-6 *copies of the text-self portion of the paper that is about 1-page in length* and 3) actively participate in the workshop activities of the day.
Five/six copies of the text-to-self portion of the assignment.	Week 7 Day 2	N/A	25 points Active Participation	To get points for this, you must 1) have your copies on-time, 2) bring 5-6 *copies of the text-world portion of the paper that is about 1-page in length* and 3) actively participate in the workshop activities of the day.
Final Draft	Week 8 Day 1 5:00PM	Week 8 Day 2 5:00PM	100 points Writing	Submit the final draft through the Turn-It-In link under the W3-OC button in Blackboard. A hard-copy version must also be submitted to the instructor in-class or to her office (L333) by the deadline.



	Yes	Some-what	No	
Summary				author's and/or characters' full name(s) given the first time mentioned
				title of text is named correctly and formatted correctly; text genre is accurately described, and characters are named.
/35				summary condenses the entire allegory into 200-words/1-page
				summary highlights the major points, concepts, ideas, facts, etc.
				content demonstrates a clear and correct understanding of the content
				mostly uses the student's own words; uses occasional direct quotes when necessary, but quotes don't "stand in" for writer's words
				information is thoroughly explained, so an unfamiliar reader would understand
				objective presentation is used; only reports on what the original text says; no argument, analysis, commentary, opinion, etc. of writer is given
				present tense is consistently used
				third person perspective is consistently used
Text to Self				content shows that the student is able to connect the text to him/herself in a deep, meaningful way; goes beyond the superficial and/or highly literal
				content is 200-words/1-page
/35				details of the self given are specific, developed, clear, and relevant
				details of the text given are specific, developed, clear, and relevant
				a clear and effective strategy is used to connect the text-self; connection is explicit
				first person singular is used correctly when writing about the self; no shifts to second person or first person plural; third person used to write about the text
Text to World				content shows that the student is able to connect the text to the world in a deep, meaningful way; goes beyond the superficial and/or highly literal
				content is 200-words/1-page
/35				details of the world given are specific, developed, clear, and relevant
				details of the text given are specific, developed, clear, and relevant
				a clear and effective strategy is used to connect the text-world; connection is explicit
				third person perspective is consistently used
Nuts & bolts				topic sentences are clear and contain a topic and an argument. Support is optional.
/45				paragraphs are unified around the topic sentence
				paragraphs are coherent, using effective transitions
				grammar, usage, word choice & syntax are correct
				tone and word choice is effective for purpose and audience
				punctuation & mechanics are correct, including MLA in-text citations
				overall critical and creative thinking show deep understanding and engagement
/150				



Plato's Allegory of the Cave from *The Republic*				
Major Points, Concepts, Etc.				Minor Points, Concepts, Etc.
Y	S	N		
			Dialog between Socrates and Glaucon.	☐ Particulars about prisoners being chained up. ☐ Particulars about the description of the cave, low wall, fire, puppeteers, etc. ☐ Prisoners naming of the shadows. ☐ Prisoners bestowing laurels on each other for their understanding of the shadows. ☐ Particulars of the freed prisoner's journey out of the cave. ☐ Particulars of the freed prisoner's time outside the cave. ☐ Particulars of the freed prisoner's return to the cave. ☐ Particulars of training children from birth to see the outside instead of the cave. ☐ Particulars of the justness associated with making rulers return to the cave.
			The Cave: prisoners are held in cave since birth. Prisoners think shadows are real.	
			Freed Prisoner Ascent: Freed prisoner has trouble seeing outside the cave because of the light, but eventually realizes the difference between the outside world and the shadows.	
			Freed Prisoner Descent: Returns to the cave, his eyesight no longer clear in the darkness. Prisoners suggest putting anyone to death who tries to lead others to the outside world.	
			Propensity for learning exists inside a person, but the "sight" is often turned in the incorrect direction.	
			Ideal Rulers: Those who are able to bridge the reality of the prisoners with that of the outside world because this will allow for the happiness of a *whole state* rather than just factions of it.	

Rubric cont.

I set the rubric up with very simple explanations for the competencies and gave the skill level very simple modifiers: yes, somewhat, and no. I find that students understand the yes, somewhat, and no explanations better than sophisticated descriptions of what an A, B, C, D, or F paper might look like. Moreover, in this assignment, I was not looking for exactly the same things that I'd be looking for in an essay, so I wanted to set up the rubric differently, making it more like a "check-list".

When using the rubric, I would go row-by-row and place a check mark in the box that corresponded with my assessment for that row. When assigning a score for each category of the rubric, I would look at the spread of checkmarks I placed in the boxes and give a holistic score that was informed by those checkboxes.

Some Challenges: This rubric is far from perfect. At first, each row of the rubric might appear to be weighted equally, but they are not. For example, in the "Summary" portion of the rubric, a row reads "summary highlights the major points, concepts, ideas, facts, etc." Because students were tasked with being able to comprehend and delineate major points from minor ones in the reading assignment, this rubric row carries more weight than the line "present tense is consistently used." Yes, I wanted present tense to be used, but I was more interested in finding some "correct" content about Plato's Allegory mentioned in their summaries.

To keep track of students hitting upon all the major points, I created a separate "breakdown" of the major and minor points from Plato. While I used this breakdown as a guide for discussion, I didn't distribute it. I wanted to assess whether or not students were able to determine—on their own—the most important points from the reading; I didn't want to give them the answers to the "test." When I photocopied the rubric for grading, I scaled the documents, so I could put the breakdown next to the rubric. As I read each student's paper, I used that breakdown first to help inform my holistic grading. Undeniably, this is a complicated approach, but it helped me keep focused on each student's paper and grade more fairly among students.

Like with most rubrics, it's unlikely that another instructor could pick up this rubric and score the same set of papers exactly the same as I did. Of course, that's the nature of writing instruction, subjectivity. Nevertheless, there's no doubt that the rows explain what I expect to see in a student's final product, so there are objective deliverables. What's more—and this is what I think is very important to understand—is that not every rubric is made for general use or for use by instructors other than the one who developed them. For them to be most useful, they should be specialized. What mattered to me was not if another instructor could copy and use the rubric right away; what mattered was if it outlined those objective skills I was trying to teach students and if they could use it as a guide. I think it does despite its flaws.

For more details about the rubric and the assignment featured here, please contact Valerie Pell, vpell@ccc.edu.

English 101 Critical Essay Rubric Guide | Department of English, Literature, and Reading – Wilbur Wright College

Overview of the Rubric

The faculty members of ELR at Wright College have designed this rubric to:

- Focus on the student learning outcomes (SLOs) of English 101, the first course in the two-semester sequence of freshman composition, and;
- Serve as a tool that will evolve over time to suit the department's various needs.

Purpose of the Rubric

This rubric is **not** to evaluate students' grades or pass/fail, but will be used primarily for:

- *Data Collection*
  Data collected from the use of the rubric will be used for assessment projects both for the department and college Assessment Committees, which will help the department better understand how its students respond to institutional changes, such as teachers' professional development, curricular policies, and administrative rules.
- *Professional Development*
  Individual instructors and the department as a whole can use collected data for development in teaching practice. Instructors can use the rubric to illustrate the various competency levels and to identify any ideas and concerns with other instructors and students.

Understanding the Competencies

There are four competency levels: *Novice* (least proficient), *Beginning Apprentice* (minimally proficient), *Advanced Apprentice* (adequately proficient) and *Emerging Scholar* (most proficient). While determining the difference between *Emerging Scholar* and *Novice* can be done with relative ease, the difference between *Beginning* and *Advanced Apprentice* may prove more challenging for some.

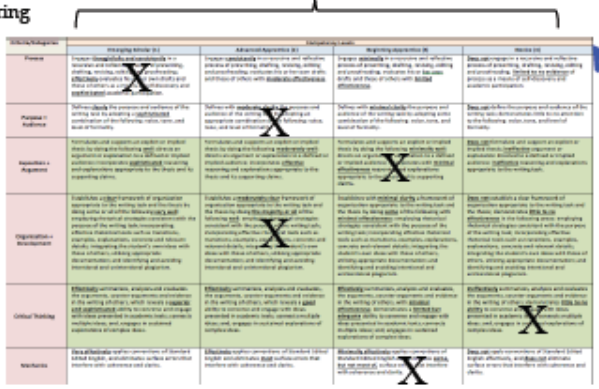
- *Beginning* and *Advanced Apprentice*, as a consequence of occupying the middle of the range of competencies, may present initial challenges to users of the rubric.
  - Work assessed at the level of *Beginning Apprentice*, in any criterion to be assessed, demonstrates proficiency beyond that of the *Novice*, nevertheless the work requires sustained support for improvement (e.g., focused instructor feedback and intervention with a writing consultant).
  - Work assessed at the level of *Advanced Apprentice* does not demonstrate proficiency at the level of the *Emerging Scholar*, but indicates an ability to improve significantly with minimal sustained support (e.g., focused instructor feedback and attentive self-editing).

Components of the Rubric

In the far left column of the rubric, there are six skills related to the SLOs for English 101. Across the top row of the rubric, there are four competency levels. The numbers associated with each competency level are there only for data analysis; **they are not intended to represent numeric grades or the evaluative weight associated with a particular skill in a particular essay.** A description can be found in each box where each skill meets a competency level.

How to Use the Rubric

- Read the rubric carefully noting differences among competency levels across all criteria.
- Place a large "X" in the box that most accurately reflects the student's competency level in each skill. **Note**: Any one student may have differing levels of proficiency across the criteria.



English 101 SLOs' Categories: *The Assessment Criteria*

Competencies: *The Levels of Proficiency*

Updated October 2015 | ELR Assessment Committee

Features

Purpose: Data collection for continuous reflection on and improvement of teaching and learning practices in first-year composition as well as college assessment work and AQIP projects.

Understanding the Competencies: Useful guidance on the difference between beginning and advanced apprentice, namely the need for writing consultant intervention and support at the lower-level of competency.

Use: Reminders to read the rubric carefully and that the rubric was not designed for use as an evaluation tool, i.e., grades, points and scores. Additionally, it is noted that any one student in one essay may exhibit differing levels of competency across the criteria.

Wilbur Wright College | Department of Literature, English + Reading | English 101 Critical Essay Rubric

Criteria + Categories	Competency Levels			
	Emerging Scholar (1)	**Advanced Apprentice (2)**	**Beginning Apprentice (3)**	**Novice (4)**
Process	Engages **thoughtfully and consistently** in a recursive and reflective process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading; **effectively** evaluates his or her own drafts and those of others as a means of self-discovery and **sophisticated** academic participation.	Engages **consistently** in a recursive and reflective process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading; evaluates his or her own drafts and those of others with **moderate effectiveness**.	Engages **minimally** in a recursive and reflective process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading; evaluates his or her own drafts and those of others with **limited effectiveness**.	**Does not** engage in a recursive and reflective process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading; **limited to no evidence** of process as a means of self-discovery and academic participation.
Purpose + Audience	Defines **clearly** the purpose and audience of the writing task by adopting a **sophisticated** combination of the following: voice, tone, and level of formality.	Defines with **moderate clarity** the purpose and audience of the writing task by adopting an **appropriate** combination of the following: voice, tone, and level of formality.	Defines with **minimal clarity** the purpose and audience of the writing task by adopting **some** combination of the following: voice, tone, and level of formality.	**Does not** define the purpose and audience of the writing task; demonstrates little to **no** attention to the following: voice, tone, and level of formality.
Exposition + Argument	Formulates and supports an explicit or implied thesis by doing the following **well**: directs an argument or explanation to a defined or implied audience; incorporates **sophisticated** reasoning and explanations appropriate to the thesis and its supporting claims.	Formulates and supports an explicit or implied thesis by doing the following **moderately well**: directs an argument or explanation to a defined or implied audience; incorporates **effective** reasoning and explanations appropriate to the thesis and its supporting claims.	Formulates and supports an explicit or implied thesis by doing the following **minimally well**: directs an argument or explanation to a defined or implied audience; incorporates with **minimal effectiveness** reasoning and explanations appropriate to the thesis and its supporting claims.	**Does not** formulate and support an explicit or implied thesis; **ineffective** argument or explanation directed to a defined or implied audience; **ineffective** reasoning and explanations appropriate to the writing task.
Organization + Development	Establishes a **clear** framework of organization appropriate to the writing task and the thesis by doing **most or all** of the following **very well**: employing rhetorical strategies consistent with the purpose of the writing task; incorporating effective rhetorical tools such as transitions, examples, explanations, concrete and relevant details; integrating the student's own ideas with those of others, utilizing appropriate documentation; and identifying and avoiding intentional and unintentional plagiarism.	Establishes a **moderately clear** framework of organization appropriate to the writing task and the thesis by doing **some** of the following **well**: employing rhetorical strategies consistent with the purpose of the writing task; incorporating effective rhetorical tools such as transitions, examples, explanations, concrete and relevant details; integrating the student's own ideas with those of others, utilizing appropriate documentation; and identifying and avoiding intentional and unintentional plagiarism.	Establishes with **minimal clarity** a framework of organization appropriate to the writing task and the thesis by doing **some** of the following with **minimal effectiveness**: employing rhetorical strategies consistent with the purpose of the writing task; incorporating effective rhetorical tools such as transitions, examples, explanations, concrete and relevant details; integrating the student's own ideas with those of others, utilizing appropriate documentation; and identifying and avoiding intentional and unintentional plagiarism.	**Does not** establish a clear framework of organization appropriate to the writing task and the thesis; demonstrates **little to no effectiveness** in the following areas: employing rhetorical strategies consistent with the purpose of the writing task; incorporating effective rhetorical tools such as transitions, examples, explanations, concrete and relevant details; integrating the student's own ideas with those of others, utilizing appropriate documentation; and identifying and avoiding intentional and unintentional plagiarism.
Critical Thinking	**Effectively** summarizes, analyzes and evaluates the arguments, counter-arguments and evidence in the writing of others, which reveals a **superior and sophisticated** ability to converse and engage with ideas presented in academic texts; connects multiple ideas; and, engages in sustained explorations of complex ideas.	**Effectively** summarizes, analyzes and evaluates, the arguments, counter-arguments and evidence in the writing of others, which reveals a **good** ability to converse and engage with ideas presented in academic texts; connects multiple ideas; and, engages in sustained explorations of complex ideas.	**Effectively** summarizes, analyzes and evaluates, the arguments, counter-arguments and evidence in the writing of others, with **minimal effectiveness**; demonstrates a **limited but adequate** ability to converse and engage with ideas presented in academic texts; connects multiple ideas; and, engages in sustained explorations of complex ideas.	**Ineffectively** summarizes, analyzes and evaluates the arguments, counter-arguments and evidence in the writing of others; demonstrates **little to no ability** to converse and engage with ideas presented in academic texts, connects multiple ideas; and, engages in sustained explorations of complex ideas.
Syntax + Usage	**Very effectively** applies conventions of Standard Edited English, and eliminates surface errors that interfere with coherence and clarity.	**Effectively** applies conventions of Standard Edited English and eliminates **most** surface errors that interfere with coherence and clarity.	**Minimally effectively** applies conventions of Standard Edited English and eliminates **some, but not most of,** surface errors that interfere with coherence and clarity.	**Does not** apply conventions of Standard Edited English effectively, and **does not** eliminate surface errors that interfere with coherence and clarity.

Features

Alignment: The language of difference/degree of competency achievement has been aligned across the criteria, e.g., "well," "moderately well" and "minimally well" for emerging scholar, advanced apprentice and beginning apprentice, respectively.

Differentiation: There is a clearer difference, via the language of difference/degree, between beginning and advanced apprentice.

Streamlining: Bullet points have been removed in favor of lists that do not require quantification of skills demonstrated within each criteria, i.e., instructors can view each criterion more holistically.

Next Steps for ELR Assessment

Intervention: In order to avoid making decisions about professional development based on limited/early data, *the* ELR Assessment Committee will review data across the critical thinking competencies and "purpose + audience" in spring 2016 in order to determine what, if any, intervention is required/ desired.

Future-focus: ELR Assessment will begin rethinking the structure, content and purpose of the existing assessment tool (the critical essay rubric) with the intention of increasing its alignment with the current process of teaching the multiple genres of academic writing in English 101 and the second semester of first-year composition, English 102. Furthermore, we will also continue to think of our work as a committee as a process for learning more about what/how we are teaching and developing ways to continue to improve/ transform our teaching, i.e., assessment is not a science, but it is a valuable tool for talking among ourselves about what we do and how/why we do what we do.

Teaching + Scholarship: From this issue forward, *Assessment News* (*AS*) will publish up to two faculty-written articles each issue: one article that is practical, reflective and of specific-immediate use; and another article that is meditative, conceptual and critical (and a bit reflective) of broad-deferred use. Many early thanks to Anndrea Ellison and Valerie Pell for being the first to write for *AS*; many pending thanks to Bill Marsh and Suzanne Sanders for agreeing to write for the early-spring 2016 issue of *AS*. Additional solicitations will be sent in the beginning of spring 2016. *However, if you are interested in writing something, please send me a note and we can discuss.*