I. Cover Page

*Please fill in the gray areas on this form.*

Date: March 4, 2019

3rd Edition Writing Plan: Spring/2019
2nd Edition submitted: Spring/2017
1st Edition submitted: Spring/2015

Psychology

WEC Unit Name

Psychology

Department

Cheryl Olman

WEC Faculty Liaison (print name)

cao@umn.edu

Email

Liberal Arts

College

Associate Professor

Title

6-7607

Phone

Writing Plan ratified by faculty

*Note: This section needs to be completed regardless of Writing Plan edition.*

Date: March 4, 2019

If Vote: 25 / 26

Process by which Writing Plan was ratified within unit (vote, consensus, other- please explain):

Vote during faculty meeting.
II. Unit Profile: Psychology

*Please fill in the gray areas on this form.*

Number of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Associate Professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Assistant Professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments about Faculty/Instructors:
The counts at right do not include contract associate and assistant professors and instructors who teach our core curriculum, which contains the majority of our formal writing instructors.

### Major(s)

**Please list each major your unit offers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Total # students enrolled in major as of Fall/2018</th>
<th>Total # students graduating with major as of AY 17/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychology, B. A.</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology, B. S.</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology, 2nd Major</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEC Process</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th># Participated</th>
<th># Invited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Grants program</td>
<td>December, 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop: Feedback</td>
<td>October, 2015</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop: refining WEC abilities/cr</td>
<td>January, 2016</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison sabbatical</td>
<td>September, 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop: 5-min. workshops</td>
<td>November, 2017</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty ratification of new abilities</td>
<td>November, 2018</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop: Scope/Feedback</td>
<td>February, 2019</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Signature Page

Signatures needed regardless of Writing Plan edition. Please fill in the gray areas on this form.

WEC Faculty Liaison

Cheryl A. Olman
Print Name

Signature

Associate Professor
Title

3/25/2019
Date

Department Head/Chair

Jeffrey Simpson
Print Name

Signature

Professor
Title

3-20-2019

Associate Dean

Ascan Koerner
Print Name

Signature

Associate Dean
Title

3/27/19
Date
IV. Writing Plan Narrative, 3rd Edition

*Please retain section headers and prompts in your plan.*

**Introductory Summary:**
Briefly describe the reason(s) this unit (department, school, college) became involved in the WEC project, the key findings that resulted from the process of developing this plan, and the implementation activities that are proposed in this Writing Plan, with particular attention to the following questions: what is new in this 3rd edition of the Writing Plan? What, if any, key changes have been made to the 2nd edition? What key implementation activities are proposed in this edition of the Writing Plan? (1 page maximum)

Psychology began participating in WEC in AY14-15. As is typical, we spent the first year developing a list of Writing Abilities and Criteria by which we could judge them. Our First Edition Writing Plan set aside funds for (1) an RA to develop http://writing.psych.umn.edu and a Moodle-based badge program so it would be easy for all instructors to require students to familiarize themselves and (2) a small grant program so faculty and graduate students. Small grants were awarded during AY 15-16 to (1) purchase APA manuals, (2) develop a Moodle-based self-assessment exercise, and (3) offer a writing intervention on “argument crafting” in PSY 1001. Unfortunately, the Moodle-based efforts were rendered useless by the University’s shift to Canvas (and they did not have enough perceived value to pursue re-development in Canvas), and the PSY 1001 intervention was foiled by the fact that the course uses computer-graded writing so students were not motivated to think about argument structure in that context.

Our Second Edition writing plan chose not to ask for additional funds, since we retained the funds that were not spent on the planned PSY 1001 intervention. Our implementation activities were: (1) for faculty, advertise and support 5-minute workshops for all faculty, emphasizing their utility in our large-enrollment 3000-level courses, and (2) for graduate students, host a workshop each semester focusing on supporting different aspects of their jobs. So far, we have held 2 workshops on giving feedback on writing, a workshop on helping students identify the appropriate scope for a paper, and a workshop on revising our Writing Abilities and Criteria. In Fall 2017, Faculty ratified revised a streamlined set of Writing Abilities and Criteria, reflected in this document. Those revised criteria were used in the 2nd Assessment of Psych Major Project papers, which occurred in Summer 2018.

In this edition of the writing plan, we propose to continue the pattern of activities that has worked well for the department in the past few years:

1) Each semester, the liaison hosts a conversation during a faculty meeting about implementing 5-minute workshops, supporting TAs in grading writing, progress they’ve seen in their students’ writing, and any frustrations or patterns of problems we need to address.

2) Each semester, the liaison hosts a workshop for TAs. The topics will rotate through the 3 that have had good traction to date: (a) helping students structure arguments, (b) helping students define appropriate scope for their assignments, and (c) responding to student writing in a way that encourages meaningful revision.

No funding is requested.

**Section 1: DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC WRITING CHARACTERISTICS**
What characterizes academic and professional communication in this discipline?

☒ There have not been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan.
☐ There have been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan. (Discuss these explicitly.)
Evidence-based, objective, explanatory and descriptive

Mechanically correct, using grammar, graphs, tables, sections, citations, etc. appropriately

Purposeful, thesis-driven, and advancing a particular point (for class assignments, on-task)

Integrative or synthetic, identifying themes in literature; conclusions that distill previous points

Reflective, i.e., showing creativity, understanding, and an interesting perspective

Illustrated – using effective visual elements as appropriate

Contextualized; showing understanding of literature and situating present argument

Analytical; critical

Logical, coherent

Section 2: DESIRED WRITING ABILITIES

With which writing abilities should students in this unit’s major(s) graduate?

☐ There have not been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan.
☒ There have been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan. (Discuss these explicitly.)

As we worked with the abilities and criteria, there were too many to keep track of, and they seemed to overlap, so in Fall, 2017, we had a workshop in which everyone re-wrote their abilities, and then the faculty ratified a new grid of abilities and criteria. The new set of abilities is:

Context
  1. Identify work that has already been done on the topic
  2. Demonstrate understanding of reader’s perspective
  3. Substantiate claims

Argument
  4. Synthesize, rather than list or re-iterate data
  5. Establish focal thesis, research question, or hypothesis early in papers
  6. Data and facts build logically to a conclusion

Style
  7. Avoid distracting the reader with low-level mistakes
  8. Use large-scale organization that supports comprehension
  9. Use visual elements as appropriate

A graphic has been created and shared with the faculty illustrating the re-mapping, but the current writing plan template does not allow for inclusion of graphics. Some of the complexity in the original set of abilities was resolved by articulating criteria at several levels of performance, as shown in Section 4.
Section 3: INTEGRATION OF WRITING INTO UNIT’S UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

How is writing instruction currently positioned in this unit’s undergraduate curriculum (or curricula)? What, if any, course sequencing issues impede an intentional integration of relevant, developmentally appropriate writing instruction?

☐ There have not been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan.
☒ There have been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan. (Discuss these explicitly.)

In general, the sequencing in the core curriculum in Psychology supports writing instruction well: in spite of the large course size, writing is incorporated in 1001; in 3001 (Research Methods) students receive explicit instruction on the structure of a research paper; in 3901 (Major Project) students are supported by frequent contact with their TAs as they develop their paper.

The resistance we heard from students about argument crafting, rather than listing facts, in our aborted intervention in 1001 gives us a chance to consider whether there are different kinds of instruction we can offer about argumentation vs. fact regurgitation early on in the curriculum. We will begin exploring the possibility of incorporating peer review exercises in 1001.

Instruction in 3001 focuses on mechanics, which is appropriate as it’s the first time students are pulling together a full length research paper. Our long term goal is to enhance instruction on argumentation, after teaching tools are developed in 3901.

The structure of 3901 (Major Project) provides that most convenient place to test out writing interventions and TA training. Students produce a 25-page research paper over the course of the semester. During the first 5 weeks, they meet with their TA one-on-one to get feedback on the scope of their research question, the references they plan to cite, and the argument they plan to develop. This gives us an excellent opportunity to test tools and techniques centered around argument crafting, thesis development and scope identification. The second 1:1 meeting with a TA happens after students have written a rough draft. This gives us opportunity to pilot interventions centered on feedback on writing.

Before WEC officially started in Psychology, the instructors of Research Methods (3001) and Major Project (3901) had already participated in several Teaching with Writing workshops and worked extensively with the Writing Center to incorporate and adapt many best practices in their courses. These activities, which are on-going, include:
- peer review of drafts of papers in Research Methods (3001)
- guiding students through an analysis of a poor writing sample (3001)
- randomized controlled studies of the effect of peer review and different methods of delivering feedback (3001)
- multiple rounds of revision and feedback (both 3001 and Major Project, 3901)
- mapping exercises to help students organize their references and arguments before they start writing (3901)
- talk-aloud protocols in small groups to work through arguments as students are drafting papers (3901)
- a department-level award is offered each year for the top paper in Major Project (3901 section leaders each set aside their best example, and then faculty readers from around the department volunteer to pick a winner)

All of the above activities are synergistic with and complementary to the activities that are specifically organized in our department under the WEC umbrella. Part of our Third Edition Writing Plan is that the intention for the WEC liaison to continue to actively coordinate with these initiatives led by the instructors of 3001 and 3901. There is strong overlap between the established grading rubrics in both classes and the Abilities and Criteria defined as part of the WEC process. We will continue to work to align the language in all three places so, as faculty adopt the WEC
criteria more broadly throughout the department, students will become more familiar with the consistent expectations.

Through our WEC-led discussions over the last several years, we have also become aware that writing is more deeply embedded throughout our curriculum than we were originally aware. Faculty throughout the department incorporate a wide range of writing assignments in their courses, even in large enrollment courses that are not writing intensive and would not be expected to use writing Meaningfully. Assignments range from short answers, short essays, lab reports and full-length papers. A non-exhaustive list of instructors who have participated in discussions about how they are using writing in their courses and how to align their teaching/grading efforts with the WEC program is:

- PSY 3031 - Introduction to Sensation and Perception (Olman): students submit weekly 1-paragraph writing assignments, focusing on citing facts some weeks and synthesizing arguments on other weeks.
- PSY 4032 - Psychology of music (Oxenham): summary and critique of research article; students are encouraged to focus on synthesizing points that came up during a class discussion that precedes the paper submission. Feedback emphasizes Abilities 2-7.
- PSY 4521 - Psych of Stress and Trauma (Frazier): research dissemination paper (emphasizing abilities 1-3, 5-7)
- PSY 5137 - Introduction to Behavioral Genetics (Matt McGue): research paper scaffolded by outline.
- PSY 5993 - Directed Research (MacDonald): research paper. Feedback emphasizes abilities 1, 4, 5, 6)

A common concern raised by the faculty above, when they participated in WEC workshops during the first few years, is synthesis. Even when instructors scaffold the assignment with outlining, the move from an acceptable outline to a coherent paper is hard for students to make. The frequency with which instructors raise this concern has directed our WEC initiative in the direction of emphasizing instruction on argumentation and logic.

Section 4: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT WRITING

What concerns, if any, have unit faculty and undergraduate students voiced about grading practices?

Please include a menu of criteria extrapolated from the list of Desired Writing Abilities provided in Section 2 of this plan. (This menu can be offered to faculty/instructors for selective adaptation and will function as a starting point in the WEC’s longitudinal rating process.)

☐ There have not been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan.
☒ There have been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan. (Discuss these explicitly.)

This document template does not allow insertion of tables, which would be the best way to format the information below, but hopefully it is still intelligible! The format is:

Ability

Gateway course work should ...
Upper level work should ...
Graduate-ready work should ...

1. Identify work that has already been done on the topic

... provide accurate descriptions of existing scholarship in the field using direct statements about what was
accomplished and how
... track back to original work for citations.
... summarize previously conducted studies so reader can understand methods and impact of present work without referring to other texts.

2. Demonstrate understanding of reader’s perspective
... anticipate reader’s level of understanding
... anticipate reader’s concerns and expectations
... motivate readers to care by telling them what is at stake

3. Substantiate claims
... portray previous literature accurately
... provide factual basis (previous literature or statistically significant result) for all claims
... distinguish explicitly between the writer’s work (opinions, data) and that of others.

4. Synthesize, rather than list or re-iterate data
... identify themes in related studies, rather than simply reiterating work
... both compare and contrast previous work
... evoke and address arguments and counter-arguments

5. Establish focal thesis, research question, or hypothesis early in papers
... state the thesis or question before discussing methods of data
... address a research question of the appropriate scope (i.e., focused enough that background can be covered thoroughly within page limit)
... tackle a question that is arguable or present a novel idea

6. Data and facts build logically to a conclusion
... connect conclusions directly (and logically) to results presented in text
... include only previous work that is directly linked to current argument
... weigh evidence, acknowledging strengths and limitations of supporting evidence

7. Avoid distracting the reader with low-level mistakes
... use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling
... adhere to a standard style for citing sources (generally APA)
... adopt the appropriate level of formality (voice); use succinct writing style

8. Use large-scale organization that supports comprehension
... make explicit (and hopefully smooth) transitions between ideas (e.g., “First ... Next ...” or “On the other hand ...”)
... use section headings as appropriate
... announce argument moves as appropriate (e.g., “In this section I will ...”)

9. Use visual elements as appropriate
... use tables to organize comparisons between numbers or ideas
... use graphs to plot data in which the reader should see trends
... use visual elements to advance the argumentation of the paper
Section 5: SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANS, including REQUESTED SUPPORT and RELATION TO PREVIOUS IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES, and SUSTAINABILITY PLANS

What does the unit plan to implement during the period covered by this plan? What forms of instructional support does this unit request to help implement proposed changes? What are the expected outcomes of named support?

How do the implementation plans of the 3rd edition Writing Plan relate to implementation activities from the 2nd and 1st edition Writing Plans? What has been successful? What was not successful? How do implementation plans build on what was learned from the first year of implementation? How do implementation plans anticipate the ongoing application of this final edition Writing Plan?

How will the unit move toward ownership of the implementation process after the end of eligibility for WEC funding? When needed, what will be sources of funding and resource support? How will ongoing evaluation and improvement of the Writing Plan take place?

The period covered by this plan is Years 6 and following of Psychology’s participation in WEC (AY 19/20 and beyond). This 3rd edition Writing Plan reflects key lessons learned during implementation of the 2nd edition Writing Plan in Years 4-5 (AY 17/18 and 18/19) of our participation in WEC:
- our priority is to teach students to develop novel and defensible thesis arguments
- this core value relies heavily on the students’ understanding of their audience

Our current implementation plans are:
- Each Fall, a workshop with Major Project TAs on using an argument mapping exercise to structure their writing. Several experienced TAs experienced a benefit from using the “Burkean Parlor” tools developed by University of Nevada/Reno’s writing program (specifically https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtKfzAolzYI), because they build nicely on mapping exercises already included in the course. The key addition, which goes beyond what has historically been taught in Major Project, is the instruction not to put something on your map unless you can name the argumentation line that connects it to something else. We will work with the instructor of Major Project to expand the use of this tool by hosting beginning-of-semester workshops at which TAs who have used this approach share their experience with new TAs.
- Spring workshops with Major Project TAs on providing effective feedback on rough drafts and/or helping students define the scope of a research question. We will focus on providing our Major Project TAs with tools for (1) responding to student’s outlines and project definitions, and (2) their 2nd meeting with students, the meeting at which they provide feedback to students on paper drafts. The goal is to help TAs grade efficiently and focus their feedback on structure, logic and argumentation rather than mechanical (surface) details.
- Continued encouragement of faculty to use 5-minute workshops hosted on the department website
- Continued gleaning of writing samples (strong/weak) on our key target areas (scope/argument) by raters during triennial writing assessment funded by WEC. The samples gleaned in Summer 2018 have provided several useful teaching examples for Major Project and TA workshops. They are also useful exemplars around which to anchor conversations with TAs about the nature of our identified Abilities and the use of our Criteria.
- Exploration of additional argument crafting exercises and electronic peer review in 1001 to enhance students’ writing experience.

There is no financial request associated with this plan; we have chosen a scope of activities that aligns well with department priorities, so the department will fund any initiatives that grow out of these efforts.

On-going evaluation and improvement of the writing plan will be performed by the liaison on an annual basis, modifying it according to priorities that grow out of workshops with TAs and faculty-meeting conversations about 5-
minute workshops and other, grassroots implementation efforts. The instructors of PSY 1001 (Intro) and PSY 3901 (Capstone) are both interested in engaging with WEC to continue the evolution of their writing instruction and assessment, although at the time of submission of this particular writing plan, those conversations are in the idea stage only.

Section 6: PROCESS USED TO CREATE THIS WRITING PLAN
How, and to what degree, were a substantial number of stakeholders in this unit (faculty members, instructors, affiliates, teaching assistants, undergraduates, others) engaged in providing, revising, and approving the content of this Writing Plan?

This writing plan was written by the department liaison as a synthesis of activities described in the 1st and 2nd Edition Writing Plans (informal lunches with faculty and instructors, workshops and conversations with TAs).