

Your Drury Fusion

Assessment Report – Fall 2020

Peter Meidlinder & Natalie Precise, YDF Co-Coordinators

FUSE 101

First-Year Experience: FUSE 101

FUSE 101 plays the initial critical role of helping students develop learning outcomes needed for doing college level work. Students develop their capacities in Writing, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy.

Learning Outcomes

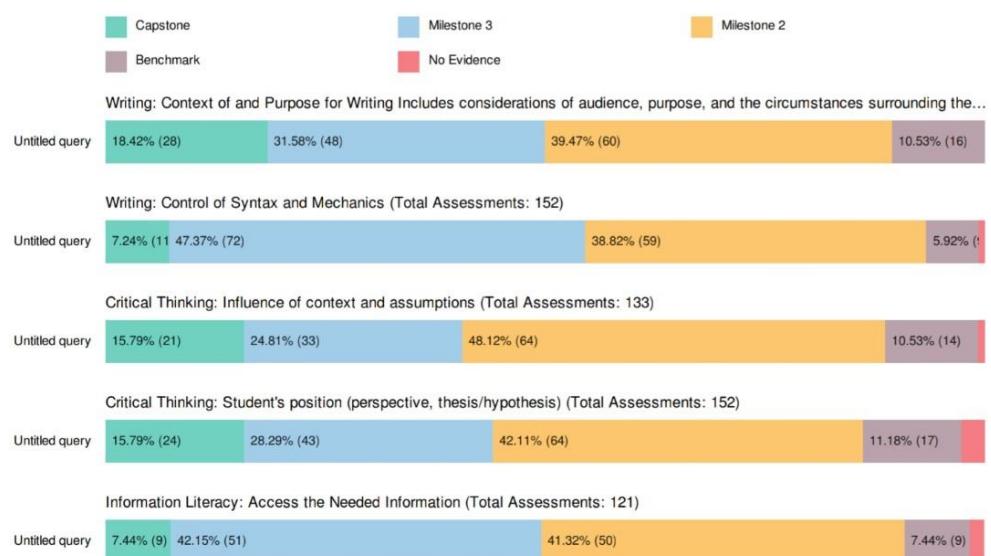
Writing: Students write frequently and in a wide variety of modes, from narratives to arguments, in order to develop clarity and directness of prose, effective paragraph structure, and modern English usage.

Critical Thinking: Students meaningfully present, interpret, and evaluate supporting and opposing evidence, and are able to identify underlying assumptions in arguments and to articulate the implications that follow from holding a particular position.

Information Literacy: Students demonstrate the ability to find and evaluate relevant sources and use the sources effectively in their work.

Summary: The FUSE 101 – Frontiers Rubric was utilized by all FUSE 101 instructors in Fall of 2019. This report included three outcomes: 1) Writing, 2) Critical Thinking, and 3) Information Literacy. These outcomes were measured with five performance levels including: No Evidence, Benchmark, Milestone 2, Milestone 3, and Capstone.

FUSE 101 FALL 2019 Report
Generated by: Peter Meidlinder 09/04/2020



The majority of students landed in Milestone 2 and 3 for all areas of the rubric as follows:

Rubric Criteria	Percentage Scoring (Milestone 2 and 3)
Writing: Context of and Purpose for Writing	71.05%
Writing: Control of Syntax and Mechanics	86.19%
Critical Thinking: Influence of Context and Assumptions	72.93%
Critical Thinking: Student's Position	70.4%
Information Literacy: Access the Needed Information	83.47%

For this freshman-level introductory course, Milestones 2 and 3 were to be expected, yet some students scored in the Capstone level. The Capstone level signifies mastery of the objective. This mastery is normally observed in higher-level courses as the students continue their program of study. The following chart shows the percentage of students scoring at the Capstone level in each area of the rubric:

Rubric Criteria	Percentage Scoring (Capstone)
Writing: Context of and Purpose for Writing	18.42%
Writing: Control of Syntax and Mechanics	7.24%
Critical Thinking: Influence of Context and Assumptions	15.79%
Critical Thinking: Student's Position	15.79%
Information Literacy: Access the Needed Information	7.64%

Data assumptions for FUSE 101 include increasing Critical Thinking in the area of Student Position, referring to student's perspectives. Further considerations for increasing the achievement of Critical Thinking: Influence of Context and Assumptions, as well as Writing: Context of and Purpose for Writing, including considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s). Continuous implementation of instructional strategies for Writing: Control of Syntax and Mechanics and Information Literacy: Access the Needed Information are encouraged.

FUSE 102

First-Year Experience: FUSE 102

FUSE 102 Intersections follows FUSE 101 and continues to play the critical role of helping students develop learning outcomes needed for doing college level work. In addition to the learning outcomes for

FUSE 101 requiring students to develop their capacities in Writing, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy; FUSE 102 adds the learning outcome of Interdisciplinary Thinking.

Learning Outcomes

Writing: Students write frequently and in a wide variety of modes, from narratives to arguments, in order to develop clarity and directness of prose, effective paragraph structure, and modern English usage.

Critical Thinking: Students meaningfully present, interpret, and evaluate supporting and opposing evidence, and are able to identify underlying assumptions in arguments and to articulate the implications that follow from holding a particular position.

Information Literacy: Students demonstrate the ability to find and evaluate relevant sources and use the sources effectively in their work.

Interdisciplinary Thinking: Students demonstrate the ability to draw upon multiple viewpoints in order to make sense of complex issues.

Discussion

The FUSE 102 course was offered for the first time in the Spring of 2020 in the inaugural year of Your Drury Fusion. It is a team-taught course, drawing upon faculty in two different disciplines, whose goal is to help students understand how two different disciplinary approaches offer sometimes complementary, sometimes conflicting methods and insights making sense of a common theme. The themes varied widely. For example, a professor of Spanish who does work in Women and Gender Studies paired with a Business Law professor to discuss cultural and legal issues related to beauty. A creative writing instructor paired with a Biology professor to explore how scientists and writers share their insights and findings about the scientific world. A professor of Rhetoric paired with a professor of Political Science to explore the impact of music on politics and culture.

The semester was interrupted at Spring Break by Covid, when all of our classes went remote, and we felt we needed to rethink our assessment plans. Faculty had to retool their courses, and many of the projects we had planned to assess relied upon student collaboration and oral presentations. We regrouped by asking that at least one faculty member from each pair join us to consider some questions that might be helpful as we consider how to improve the course for the Spring 2021.

We asked instructors to consider these questions:

As you consider your experiences team-teaching FUSE 102 this spring, can you reflect on these questions:

- 1--What worked? What didn't work?
- 2--What do we need to get better at? What do students need to get better at?
- 3--What thoughts do you have for making this experience even better for us and students going forward?

The FUSE 102 instructors got together for a Zoom call the week of May 18 (right after finals week). Below is a summary of our conversation:

- The most important conversations revolved around defining the LOs of this course. FUSE 102 is new in the sense that it completes the 2-course FYE sequence, raising really important perspectives about

the role it plays in students' ongoing development as readers, writers, and thinkers. Instructors felt we needed to answer two questions clearly: How does FUSE 102 continue to develop the work begun in the Fall FUSE 101? How do we define the work that goes on in operational ways?

- Almost every instructor felt energized by team-teaching. They saw the opportunity as a uniquely valuable and challenging opportunity. Several commented on how much they learned from working with another faculty member, not only in terms of the disciplinary knowledge they brought to the course but also in terms of their approach to engaging students, explaining an idea, or preparing students for an assignment. Many adopted pedagogical strategies used by their co-instructor. One commented, "all faculty should be required to team-teach more often. It can invigorate our teaching."
- As a group, they all welcomed the challenge of experimenting with different models of team-teaching and looked forward to teaching the class again to refine their approach. Having taught the course once, they had a better sense of knowing which activities worked well with all students and both instructors in the room and which worked better in smaller groups, one instructor per group.
- On the other hand, they all noted that team-teaching takes more time. Faculty have to spend more time planning; more time talking about and agreeing on grades, rubrics, assignments, activities; more time dealing with student concerns ("when students email us, to ask for an extension or register a concern, for example, I can't just make the call; I have to huddle up with my partner to make the call together").
- Some faculty expressed the concern that students did not see coherent or complementary themes from the two faculty. A few students expressed this concern in their IDEA evaluation comments. In part, this arises because we needed to create additional sections of the course late in the fall semester, when some faculty were paired together out of necessity and had to come up with a course with little time to prepare.
- The courses typically enrolled 36-38 students, and faculty felt that made it difficult to get to know all the students well. Both primary models of team-teaching had limits in this way: either instructors divided their students into two groups and so only spent only half the time with students; or they spent most class periods with all 36-38 students and so did not get to hear from as many students. Mentoring relationships are important with our First-Year students, so we want to address this concern with instructors in the fall before the semester begins.

FUSE 102 ASSESSMENT ACTION ITEM:

September 24, 2020

FUSE 102 PLANNING MEETING

Focus on Pedagogy: Meeting students where they are

As we prepare to teach FUSE 102 in the Spring, let's focus on defining how the course builds upon the fall FUSE 101 course. These questions may be useful starting points:

Where are students on their developmental journeys (after completing FUSE 101)? What can they do now? Where do they need to go? How can FUSE 102 move them along on their journeys?

FUSE 102 helps students

- ✓ enter conversations that matter
- ✓ develop agency as writers and thinkers and develop a clear, direct voice
- ✓ cultivate self-awareness and self-understanding of their sense of purpose and sense of belonging
 - a sense of belonging nurtures a growth mindset (Conversations about Transition)

- clarifying our values nurtures a sense of purpose/calling
- ✓ understand themselves and their relationship to the present moment

Over the course of the fall semester, as we design our courses, we will keep these goals front and center as we define the unique place of FUSE 102 in the curriculum.

Exploration Assessment Reports

Summary: Teams of 2-3 faculty members were assigned to each of the Exploration categories to conduct an assessment of the learning objectives through a Watermark rubric. Originally, Exploration Assessment Teams were asked to assess student learning in the Explorations course they teach. This involved three steps: 1) Establish a plan for collecting evidence of student learning and archiving it in Watermark (early fall/mid fall); 2) Assess that learning using the rubrics established for each Exploration category (late fall/early spring); and 3) Submit an assessment report (late fall/early spring). Therefore, in September and October of 2019, the YDF Co-Coordinators met with each Explorations team to review the rubrics and discuss questions and suggestions. Teams were asked to utilize their assigned Watermark rubric to assess one assignment within the Fall 2019 semester to showcase the level of mastery of the learning objectives for their Exploration category. The Exploration rubrics were drawn from AACU VALUE rubrics and adapted to the Exploration learning objectives. These faculty members were asked to write an Exploration Assessment Report in early Spring 2020 of the process including suggestions for improvement and notes for future Exploration teams. The YDF Co-Coordinators met to discuss the Exploration Assessment Reports.

Conclusions were drawn from these reports as follows:

Faculty Recommendation	YDF Co-Coordinator Response
Changes to rubric wording	Changes were noted and made to some rubrics as suggested
Selecting an Explorations assignment that better aligns with the rubric for each course	Suggestions for providing faculty with the assignment rubric attached to their Exploration course as early as when their course is approved for Exploration curriculum
Template for report	Providing an exemplar in Appendix A; creating a template found in Appendix B
Streamline scoring versus scoring in Moodle and Watermark	Currently the two systems do not merge; this serves as a goal for future improvement
Needing Watermark assistance	Presentations provided at faculty meetings; written directions provided; individual meetings conducted for support

It is requested that future Exploration Reports include the following: an overview of the assignment(s) and process, results of the rubric are summarized through a narrative which may include graphical representation, and recommendations for future Exploration teams for that specific Explorations category.

Most team members provided a report individually instead of one report for the collective group. Future plans would be for each Exploration Category Team to submit one report as a group. See Appendix A for an Explorations Report Example from an individual team member (identifying markers have been removed) and Appendix B for suggested Exploration Report Template.

Appendix A: Explorations Report Example

To: YDF Coordinators

From:

Date:

Re: Watermark Assessment for *insert Explorations category*

Assignment: The [insert course] was included in the trial run for the [insert explorations category] assessment in the Watermark system. The instructor included the following assignment in Watermark as well as the rubric that would be used for assessment.

Read the “Whaling in Early America” document posted on Moodle then respond to the following questions. Each should be 3-5 sentences. There is no need to underline terms that are used from the class, but use of terms are encouraged when appropriate.

- 1) *The early American colonies were established in part based on commercial interests. How did fishing and whaling play a part in the development of commercial interest (and financial backing) for the colonies from investors in England?*
- 2) *How does the presence of a recognized resource—timber, gold, or in this case—whales—impact the development of technology and the pursuit of new business ventures in nearby communities? In other words, as the early American coastal settlers looked out to see and saw the abundance of whales, what did they begin thinking about making or doing to allow them to capitalize on this resource?*
- 3) *Why were the whales valuable? What are some of the uses for whale carcasses?*
- 4) *The early European settlers and coastal Native American people interacted, and sometimes worked together, around this issue of drift whaling. What were their common interests, and do you see a potential here for future conflict?*

Process: Students and the Instructor had difficulty with the new platform, as can be expected, so the instructor had a copy of the assignment posted on Moodle to facilitate completion. By the end of the semester all but two students were able to appropriately submit the document on Watermark, but one that resubmitted the assignment could not be accessed (24 out of 27 collected). There were also two student listed on Watermark that were not in the class. The next time this instructor completes the assessment he will probably require that students submit the assignment as a PDF file because some word processing extensions were more difficult than others to access via Watermark.

Results: Going forward I would encourage the assessment tool (assignment) to be directly linked to the rubric. The assignment was already part of the course and trying to use it to assess the objectives was a difficult task and the evaluator had to be liberal with interpretation of the students’ terminology. Even though students were provided with the rubric they had a tendency to respond as they would on an assignment that is more geared toward [insert course]. In particular, the area of authority at multiple levels was difficult to assess given the rubric references to governmental structures. The evaluator interpreted references England and to Native Americans as multiple levels given the assignment.

Recommendation: A new assessment tool that better aligns with the rubric and possible tweaks to the rubric would improve the accuracy of the assessment. Students should be required to submit the assignment with a .PDF document and the completed earlier in the semester to address any issues.

Appendix B: Explorations Report Template

Explorations Report

To: YDF Co-Coordinators

From:

Date:

Course(s) Assessed:

Explorations Category:

Assignment(s): provide narrative to explain assignment being assessed with great detail.

Process: provide a detailed explanation of the process for the assignment and rubric completion.

Results: provide a detailed explanation of the results including graphical representation as necessary.

[insert graphical representation of data]

Recommendations: provide a detailed narrative written to future faculty members in your Exploration category that will be useful for them in planning their own Exploration assessment.