

1. Writing Plan Cover Page

- First Edition of Writing Plan:
 Subsequent Edition of Writing Plan: (Please Explain)

Sociology Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters

WEC Unit Name College

Department: Sociology

WEC Faculty Liaison: Mark Harvey Title: Associate Professor

Email: mharve16@fau.edu Phone: 561 297-3813

Writing Plan Ratified by Faculty

Date: August 25, 2017 _____ If Vote: 7 / 7
#yes #total

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

This writing plan was ratified by a vote during the faculty meeting of August 25 ,2007. Prior to the vote the plan was emailed to all tenure line faculty, instructors, and adjuncts to receive their feedback/input, including objections. All feedback received was supportive of the plan. Regarding the vote, because 4 of our 12 tenure-line faculty are on leave (medical, sabbatical, etc.) only 7 faculty attended the meeting during which the vote was held. These faculty were unanimously in support of the plan.

2. Unit Profile: _____

Number of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty:

___ 3 ___ Professors
 ___ 6 ___ Associate Professors
 ___ 3 ___ Assistant Professors
 ___ 5 ___ Instructors
 ___ 17 ___ Total

Major(s) Total # students enrolled in Total # students graduating
 Please list each major your Unit offers: major as of ___ Oct, 2017 ___ with major AY ___ 2016 ___

B.A. Sociology	600	110

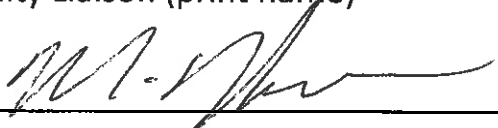
WEC Process	Date	Participated	/	# invited
Intro Meeting for Faculty	Feb 2016	11	/	12
Online Faculty Survey	April 2016	13	/	21
Online Student Survey	April 2016	170	/	~450
Online Affiliate Survey	Oct 2016	11	/	21
Meeting 1	Oct 31, 2016	12	/	17
Meeting 1 (cont)			/	
Meeting 2	Dec 12, 2016	9	/	17
Meeting 2 (cont)			/	

<u>Meeting 3</u>	<u>March 1, 2017</u>	<u>7</u>	/	<u>17</u>
<u>Meeting 4</u>	<u>April 17, 2017</u>	<u>7</u>	/	<u>17</u>

3. Signature Page


Electronic signatures may be submitted in lieu of this page. If this page is submitted as a hard copy, please include a print out of the electronic signature chain here.

WEC Faculty Liaison

Mark Harvey
 WEC Faculty Liaison (print name)

 Signature

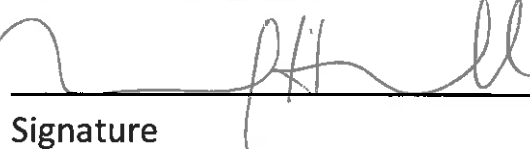
Associate Professor
 Title
10/4/17
 Date

Department Head/Chair

Ann Branaman
 Print/Name)

 Signature

Professor and Chair
 Title
10/4/17
 Date

College Dean

Michael J. Horswell
~~WEC Faculty Liaison~~ (print name)

 Signature

Dean
 Title
10-4-17
 Date

WEC WRITING PLAN NARRATIVE

Department of Sociology
Florida Atlantic University
Summer 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This writing plan for the Department of Sociology at Florida Atlantic University was developed over the course of the 2016-2017 year academic year. It is the outcome of collaboration between the sociology faculty and the FAU WEC team/consultants. Through the WEC process, the department engaged in data collection and faculty discussions concerning desired student writing outcomes and strategies to achieve them.

There is broad agreement among department faculty that sociology majors are not graduating with adequate writing skills. The faculty survey indicated that only 8% are satisfied with the quality of student writing. Additionally, the survey of majors indicated that some are not satisfied with the quantity or quality of feedback they receive on written assignments. These data along with faculty discussions of student writing abilities leave no doubt that improvement in the delivery of writing skills is needed.

The faculty identified six skills we believe our majors should possess to be able to write sociologically: These are: Critical reading; cogent argumentation; analysis of empirical data; application of theories/concepts; evaluation of sociological work; and reflexivity. Curriculum mapping indicated that while many of the skills are being taught in particular classes, there is no consistency in skill delivery among classes at the same level (e.g., 3000 level courses) nor is there any systemic scaffolding of skill delivery as students move from introductory level courses to intermediate and advanced courses (i.e., across course levels). Discussion of assessment/measurement indicated that the department has no common standards regarding how to assess student writing or how to measure improvement in writing skills. Some members of the department have been involved in skill building and assessment through the university's OURI initiative.

While the need for WEC is great, so too are the obstacles to successful implementation. We mention but a few here. As a department serving a large percentage of non-traditional students (first-generation college, first and second generation immigrants, non-native English speakers, community college transfers, low-income, full-time workers, parents) a significant proportion of majors enter our classrooms lacking basic reading, writing and analytical skills. Second, because sociology majors everywhere tend to find the discipline late in their college careers, the structure of our major is essentially horizontal, allowing students to take upper-level courses without having taken introductory and intermediate level courses. Three, large class size (35 student minimum) constrains the amount of student writing faculty can read and provide feedback on. Given these structural constraints our goals in implementing WEC are modest and focused on the long-term (10 years).

Our overarching goal is to improve the sociological writing and thinking skills of our majors. Specifically, this entails stronger development of their ability to critically read sociological texts, to construct coherent and cogent arguments, to work with empirical data, to understand and apply conceptual frameworks, to critically evaluate competing claims about social issues, and to understand their own lives in relation to social issues/problems (reflexivity).

We plan to pursue this goal by incorporating writing more systematically into our curriculum. During the first two years of implementation we plan to continue the faculty discussions and analyses, begun during the planning year, regarding the structure of our curriculum and the development of writing assignments at our various course levels (i.e., introductory (1000-2000), intermediate (3000), and advanced courses (4000)) so as to provide our students with, 1) more consistent exposure to skill-based writing assignments among courses at the same level (e.g., 1000 level) and, 2) more systematic development of writing skills as they move from lower- to upper-level courses. We plan to hold retreats and trainings for faculty on curriculum design, the development of writing assignments, the effective use of GTAs and rubric grading, the development of a departmental rubric, and the assessment of WEC impacts. We plan to institute an annual training program/course for GTAs on basic writing skills, sociological writing skills, and assessing written work. We also plan to begin to track our students' path through the major to better understand their experiences, decision making processes, and needs. We propose to use WEC funds to hire a 50% GTA (10 hours per week) to assist the program liaison with all aspects program implementation. Additionally, we propose to employ an undergraduate "peer mentors" funded at 25% of the GTA rate to assist students with basic writing (e.g., grammar, composition, citations, etc.).

SECTION ONE: DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC WRITING CHARACTERISTICS

What characterizes academic and professional communication in this discipline?

The faculty survey and discussion indicate that sociological communication/writing is characterized by three basic traits; it is empirical, analytical, and critical.

1. Sociology is an *empirical* science and as such sociological writing requires the clear and accurate description of *social phenomena*.
 - Empirical – based on evidence/data
 - Clear and accurate description – Identify and explain patterns in data
 - Social phenomena -- social identities, relations, and structures

2. Sociology is an *explanatory* science that seeks to identify causal relationships between sets of variables. It requires the application of *analytical tools* to explain observed social phenomena, relations between them, and processes of change (i.e., conceptualization, operationalization, comparisons, causality, etc.)
 - Explanatory science – Beyond describing, explain how things are
 - Causal relationships – How one social factor affects another, for example, the effects of poverty on educational attainment
 - Analytical tools – Theoretical concepts for explaining social processes, for example, how *class structure* explains voting patterns

3. Finally, good sociological writing is marked by a *critical/reflexive* character that is attentive to the *power dynamics* at play in social relations, including in the relationship of the observer (e.g., the sociologist) to the observed (e.g., workers, the poor, the family, etc...).
 - Critical/reflexive – Understanding one’s own position/role in the social issue one is studying
 - Reflecting on how to use knowledge to create more just ways of organizing social institutions
 - Power dynamics – Positions of privilege and subordination between persons and groups

SECTION TWO: DESIRED WRITING ABILITIES

With which writing abilities should students in this major graduate?

The faculty survey and discussion produced the following 6 core writing abilities with which all majors should graduate.

1. Critical reading

- a. identifying/understanding the basic anatomy of sociological texts (research question, methods, findings, and implications)
- b. accurately summarizing the work of others
- c. distinguishing between different types of written sources (scholarly versus journalistic, etc.)
- d. explaining the contributions and shortcomings of sociological studies

2. Coherent and cogent argumentation

- a. clear writing that is logically organized and grammatically correct
- b. development of logically coherent and well-integrated narratives including thesis statements, statements of the organization of the paper, presentation of evidence, analysis, and implications
- c. synthesizing various sources to develop one’s own position
- d. developing persuasive arguments using data and disciplinary discourse

3. Analyzing empirical data/evidence

- a. distinguishing between types of empirical data and their uses (quantitative/qualitative)
- b. understanding methods of data collection
- c. accurately describing and interpreting data
- d. organizing/coding data into categories
- e. making appropriate comparisons
- f. using data to measure variables/variation and uncover themes
- g. drawing accurate conclusions from data
- h. recognizing the limitations of data

4. Understanding and applying theory/conceptual frameworks

- a. identifying core assumptions of theories
- b. accurately interpreting theoretical arguments
- c. clearly defining theoretical concepts
- d. using theory to develop sociological research questions
- e. identifying and proposing theses/causal arguments
- f. Operationalizing concepts with data

5. Evaluating sociological work

- a. Identifying logical/systematic links between evidence and arguments
- b. distinguishing analysis from advocacy
- c. identifying the strengths and weaknesses (limitations) of sociological arguments/studies
- d. Identifying the implications of a particular study for the broader field

6. Reflexivity

- a. Understanding one's own position/standpoint in systems of social relations

SECTION THREE: INTEGRATION OF WRITING INTO THE CURRICULUM

How is writing instruction currently positioned in this department's undergraduate curriculum? What, if any, structural plans does this unit have for changing the way that writing and writing instruction are sequenced across its course offerings? With what rationale are changes proposed and what indicators will signify their impact?

The position of writing instruction in the department's current undergraduate curriculum is weak. Prior to the initiation of WEC there was no discussion among faculty regarding the role of writing in our curriculum. WEC initiated this discussion. By identifying the writing skills we all agree are needed by majors, by mapping the delivery of these skills across the curriculum, and by examining the amount and types of writing currently required in each course (done through a review of syllabi for courses taught in Spring 2017) we have begun the process of constructing some general consensus on the role of writing in our curriculum and how to deliver writing skills.

Currently, writing plays a small role in our curriculum. The course syllabi reviewed indicate that most courses--including many 4000-level courses--require no more than 5 to 7 pages of writing. The fact that we do not require our majors to write much sociology undoubtedly goes a long way towards explaining why we find their writing abilities to be unsatisfactory.

Additionally, the amount of writing required varies greatly across courses--but not in the way one would expect. We would expect the amount and sophistication of writing to increase as students move from lower- to upper division-courses. And while the amount of writing in lower division courses is very low, about 3 pages, the amount required among upper-level courses (e.g., 4000) varies broadly as some 4000 level courses require only 3 pages others require 10, 15, and, in one case, 25pgs. Regarding types of writing, there is not much evidence indicating that the writing required at the 4000 level is more complex or research-oriented than that done at the

introductory level. That said, these observations are based on a cursory look at course syllabi and a more in-depth analysis of writing across our curriculum will be conducted during the implementation stage (see SECTION 5).

Finally, curriculum mapping indicates that there is little scaffolding of skill delivery across the curriculum. Again, one would expect more basic writing skills to be the focus of lower-division courses and more advanced skills to be developed in the upper. While basic skills are the focus of the lower level, it is not clear that those skills are being built upon and complemented at higher levels in a systematic way. The curriculum mapping exercise conducted during the planning year indicated that Skill Building writing assignments are lacking in our 3000 level courses (which tend to emphasize Exposure). A more rigorous mapping of our entire curriculum will be conducted early in the implementation stage.

Regarding plans for changing the way that writing and writing instruction are sequenced across course offerings. Before explaining our plans for improving student writing, it must be noted that the weak position of writing in our program is--in no small part--an outcome of structural factors that lie outside of our department. The poor basic reading and writing skills of many of our students, their late discovery of the major, excessively large class sizes (40 students is hardly a "small" 4000 level class), heavy teaching loads, and limited GTA support set hard limits on our ability to develop students into strong sociological writers. Even factors that are within our control, such as imposing pre-requisites as part of course sequencing, are constrained. For example, the fact that many sociology majors come to us from community college and do not find the discipline until late in their academic careers requires us to maintain a largely horizontal curricular structure so that they can complete course work and graduate "on time" (an increasingly short period of time). As a result, many of our majors cram most of their sociology courses into two or three semesters, making the scaffolding of skill delivery nearly impossible.

That said, steps have already been taken to improve student writing and the department is committed to doing what we can to achieve this goal. The WEC program will allow the department to extend and expand on three efforts already in progress. First, in 2014 the department restructured our curriculum to attract majors at an earlier point in their career and insert some scaffolding into the delivery of skills by making a distinction between our 3000 and 4000 level courses. This entailed increasing the size of a number of our upper-level courses from 50 to 75 or 100 students (what we call the "big 3000s") in order to reduce the size of others to 40 or 35 students (our "small 4000s"). The big 3000s are intended to function as lecture courses that introduce students to general areas of sociology (e.g., racial and ethnic relations), attract new majors, and prepare students for work in more discussion- and research-based courses at the 4000 level. The idea is that writing assignments at the 3000 level will be designed to provide students with the Exposure and Skill Building level skills needed to perform more sophisticated work in 4000 level courses. Exposure-level skills include the ability to work with evidence/data, explain/discuss concepts, and to accurately and fairly summarize the work of others, including identifying their theses and supporting evidence. Skill Building work entails *applying* concepts/theory to *analyze* cases, including accurately describing the empirical aspects of a case, breaking a case into subcomponents/dimensions for analysis, and making arguments about the case that link evidence to a theory. Also, since many of our majors require development of basic writing skills these assignments should assess student writing and provide some feedback on

spelling, grammar, composition, formatting, references etc. GTAs and undergraduate peer mentors will be specifically tasked to work with students on these basic aspects of writing. Assignments might include a number of short (2-3pg.) papers. At the 4000 level, students will apply these skills to the development of research papers (10-12pgs) in which they review literature, develop their own research questions, gather data, and conduct analyses.

Second, in 2015 the department began participating in the university's OURI program, which emphasizes learning through research. Currently, 12 sociology courses are designated OURI including theory courses, methods courses, IFP courses, and one 4000-level course on poverty. Each of these courses contains a research component that involves writing. They also employ various methods to assess the attainment of skills which are designed by faculty in consultation with OURI staff. Through OURI, participating faculty have begun to think of skill delivery in terms of Bloom's Taxonomy of three levels: "Exposure" (EX), "Skill Building" (SB), and "Intensive" (IN). Through WEC discussions, participating faculty (about half the tenure line and instructor faculty) agreed that it would make sense to map the delivery of these skill levels across our curriculum (as noted above), with lower-division courses focusing on the EX level, 3000 level courses focusing on EX and SB levels, and 4000 level courses focused on SB and some IN level work. The mapping conducted under WEC indicated that our curriculum is currently tilted towards EX type work at all course levels. It also indicated that SB work is lacking at the 3000 level, especially as regards Skill 2 (cogent argumentation), Skill 4 (application of concepts), and Skill 6 (reflexivity). Faculty agreed that one key to improving student writing will be the introduction of more SB work at the 3000 level and the creation of more 3000 level courses. Thus, during Year One of implementation faculty will work to achieve a deeper understanding of our current curricular map and some consensus on which skills we want delivered at each level of the curriculum and how (see Section 5).

Third, in 2015 the department ceased using second-year graduate students to teach their own lower-division courses and began assigning all graduate students to work as teaching assistants. This change complements the creation of the large 3000-level courses such that faculty are expected to use GTAs to assist with grading basic writing assignments following rubrics designed by faculty. Currently some faculty use GTAs to grade student writing while others do not. To date, the use of GTAs to grade student writing has not been without problems. Graduate student writing abilities vary widely, thus it is understandable that faculty are hesitant to use GTAs as graders. Also, faculty familiarity/comfort with using rubrics to grade written work also varies. As such, a major component of implementation of WEC will require significant attention to the issue of GTA capacities and training as well training/discussions for faculty on how to use GTAs and rubric grading.

The rationale for these changes and the department's participation in WEC is improvement in the delivery of core sociological skills to our students.

What indicators will signify impacts? Improvement in student writing over time is of course the main indicator of program impacts. Baseline samples of student writing at various course levels (1000, 3000, 4000) will be collected and compared to samples taken 3, 5, 8, 10 years post-implementation. The faculty survey and surveys of student majors and affiliates will be replicated in the Spring of 2019 and compared to the 2016 baseline. Changes in outcomes must

be proceeded by changes in processes and activities. Thus, changes to our curricular structure, course syllabi and writing assignments will be tracked to provide indicators of change in the processes needed to achieve the outcome of better student writing. Efforts will also be made to track student's paths through the major to better understand their experience and determine if program changes have any positive impacts. Also important will be the assessment of faculty experience of this process, which will not be evinced in student writing samples or surveys. For example, what impact will this work have on faculty feelings of job satisfaction and, in turn, faculty retention? Perhaps the faculty could be surveyed on such questions early on the process.

SECTION FOUR: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT WRITING

How does the department currently communicate writing expectations (see 1 and 2) to undergraduate students? How satisfied is the unit faculty that students are adequately familiar with writing expectations? How satisfied is the faculty that student writers are successfully meeting the identified expectations by the time the graduate? Why? If less than satisfied, what plans does the department propose for closing the gap?

How does the department currently communicate writing expectations (see 1 and 2) to undergraduate students? Prior to the initiation of WEC, faculty did not discuss writing expectations, thus expectations vary widely across faculty members and are not communicated to students in any consistent or coherent manner. Rather, students learn of writing expectations for each course upon entering the classroom.

Re faculty satisfaction that students are familiar with writing expectations: Faculty are not satisfied with student familiarity with writing expectations. Because faculty lack any general agreement on expectations, students cannot be familiar with them.

Re faculty satisfaction that majors are meeting the writing expectations by the time they graduate: As indicated in the faculty survey and discussions, faculty are unsatisfied that students are meeting the writing expectations identified in Sections 1 and 2 (above) by the time they graduate.

Re plans to close the gap between faculty expectations and student knowledge/attainment of them. The department plans to narrow this gap through the integration of WEC into the structural changes already underway. First, the department's writing expectations need to be made explicit. The WEC process has allowed us to identify six core skills which we agree are key to writing for the sociology major (See SECTION 2). Thus, we now have a set of general expectations that can be operationalized in our curriculum and course designs and clearly communicated to majors. The next step will be for faculty to reach some general agreements on how these skills will be delivered through the curriculum structure and course assignments. As noted, the structural changes made to our curriculum (the big 3000s and smaller 4000s) are intended to facilitate the sequencing of skill delivery. To date the new structure has not been realized in practice. Work will be needed during the implementation phase to create some consensus among faculty regarding the operationalization of this structure, methods of delivering skills, and assessment of skill attainment. Finally, effective communication of writing expectations to majors may also require some modifications to how we advise our majors. Currently, the department is not involved in advising. The implementation of WEC will therefore include looking at how our

majors work their way through the curriculum and how understanding this process may be applied in advising.

SECTION FIVE: SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND REQUESTED SUPPORT

Based on the above discussions. What does the unit plan to implement during the period covered by this plan? What forms of instructional support does the unit request to help implement proposed changes? What are the expected outcomes of named support? What kinds of assessment support does the unit request? What are the expected outcomes of this support?

During the first 2 years of implementation we plan to take the following steps:

1. *Faculty retreat -- development of a map for writing across our curriculum including writing expectations for 1000, 3000, and 4000 level courses (Fall 2017).*
2. *Faculty tour of FAU Center for Excellence in Writing (Fall 2017)*
3. *Faculty training in instructional design/writing assignments (Spring 2018).*
4. *Faculty discussion/training on the use of GTAs and rubrics for grading (Fall 2017).*
5. *GTA training on writing and assessing written work (Spring 2018, Fall 2018)*
6. *Tracking students through the major in order to better understand their decision making processes and needs (Spring 2018).*
7. *Collection and analysis of course syllabi and writing assignments (Fall 2018).*
8. *Faculty workshop on assessing WEC Impacts, (Fall 2018).*
9. *Training 2 undergraduate peer mentors to assist with Basic Writing Skills (Spring 2018-Spring 2019).*
10. *Training 1 GTA to work with the department liaison on all aspects of implementation (data collection, analysis, organizing workshops, assessment of program impacts, etc.).*
11. *Best Sociology Undergraduate Student Paper Competition*

1_ Faculty development of a map for writing across our curriculum including writing expectations for 1000, 3000, and 4000 level courses.

WEC initiated a departmental discussion of the role of writing across our curricular structure however more in-depth discussion is needed involving a larger group of faculty (participation in WEC discussion was limited to about 7 mostly tenure-line faculty). Thus, we propose holding a workshop on curriculum design facilitated by an expert in the field. One proximate outcome of this discussion would be some rough agreement on 1) the amount of “finished” writing (i.e., number of typed, logically organized, clear, and clean pages) to be completed in courses at the 1000, 3000, and 4000 levels as well as 2) on the character of written assignments at each level (i.e., Exposure, Skill Building, Intensive). The WEC liaison drafted a partial rubric that outlines the delivery and assessment of each of the 6 core skills in Spring 2017 (see APPENDIX). This rubric will be refined and completed through faculty discussions in Fall 2017. Another proximate outcome would be faculty agreement on whether some current 4000 level courses (e.g., Gender and Society) would be more effective as Big 3000s and, if so, which ones. Finally, another desirable outcome would be the development of some *enforceable* pre-requisites and/or “co-requisites” for students seeking to enroll in 4000 level courses. Support for these activities would include a facilitator, either

from the FAU Center for Excellence in Writing (hereafter CEW) or an external institution. More distal outcomes of these activities include common standards for writing assignments at the course various levels, a common set of expectations that could be clearly articulated to students, and, ultimately, some degree of scaffolding of skill development among majors.

2_ Faculty tour of FAU Center for Excellence in Writing

We propose that the faculty and perhaps GTAs tour the Center for Excellence in Writing to gain a better understanding of the resources available. CEW staff would lead the tour and the main outcomes would be more effective student utilization of the CEW and better student writing.

3_ Faculty training in instructional design/writing assignments

As noted, our upper-level courses are currently marked by an emphasis on the transmission of substantive knowledge (Exposure) over the delivery of skills (Skill Building). To introduce more SB into our curriculum we propose a workshop on course design that would cover the development of effective writing assignments, methods of skill development, and methods of assessing student writing. Support for this step would include funding for a facilitator, again, either CEW staff or a sociologist with expertise in the area. The proximate outcome would be a shift in course content, evidenced in syllabi, at the 3000 and 4000 levels, to incorporate more skill development alongside the transmission of substantive knowledge. More distal outcomes would include more consistency among faculty in the types of writing assigned, more effective and targeted assignments that develop specific skills, and more consistent and valid assessment of skill achievement.

4_ Faculty discussion/training on the use of GTAs and rubrics for grading.

Under this plan, GTAs will be expected to grade a significant amount of student writing and provide accurate and fair assessments of it. As noted, the quality of our GTAs varies widely, as does faculty use of GTAs with some faculty using GTAs to grade heavy loads of writing, others asking them to grade very little, and others not using them to grade at all. The negative ramifications of this are myriad. For example, our GTA culture has suffered as GTAs tasked with heavy grading loads resent the fact that others are required to do comparatively little. This, in turn, has reportedly led to slacking by some GTAs tasked with grading which, in turn, reinforces the belief among some faculty that GTAs cannot be trusted to grade student writing (and the cycle goes on). We propose that faculty and GTAs would benefit from workshops/discussions that clarify the role of GTAs in the department and how faculty can best work with them in terms of providing support, oversight, communicating expectations, and developing and working with rubrics. Again, these workshops, discussions could be facilitated by a CEW staff or an external sociologist. The expected outcome would be more effective use of GTAs, the provision of more and better quality feedback on writing to students, and greater job satisfaction among GTAs. One potential indicator of GTA satisfaction would be an annual exit survey.

5_ GTA training on writing and assessing written work

Insofar as our plan relies heavily on GTAs to grade written work they will require significant training on writing in addition on how to assess and constructively critique the writing of students. Thus we propose a training course for our GTAs led by CEW. The expected outcome of this stage would be more skilled, confident, effective, and happy GTAs. [Note, because at least half of our GTAs come to us from our undergraduate program, they lack experience with writing in general and writing sociology at the undergraduate level more specifically. Thus, the proposed changes in our overall approach to undergraduate writing should, over the long term, produce better GTAs]

6_ Tracking students through the major in order to better understand their decision making processes and needs.

The department would benefit from a better understanding who our majors are and how they move through our program. Despite the structural changes noted above, in practice our curriculum effectively remains horizontal. What is more, it will likely need to remain that way to some degree, as many/most sociology majors discover the discipline late in their college careers and thus cram 4 or 5 sociology courses per semester into their last year. Thus, a systematic tracking of our student majors would help us to understand their paths and make potentially beneficial adjustments.

7_ Collection and analysis of course syllabi and writing assignments

The GTA will work with the Liaison to analyze changes in course syllabi and writing assignments resulting from WEC. Support includes liaison and GTA time. Expected outcomes include understanding the extent to which faculty incorporate the standards/practices developed through the WEC process into teaching practices.

8_ Faculty workshop on assessing WEC Impacts

This WEC plan must be faculty owned and thus its outcomes must also be evaluated by faculty. Support would entail the assistance of CEW staff. Expected outcomes would be refinements to the plan that would improve its long-term impacts.

9_ Training of 3 (2 at Boca, 1 at Davie) undergraduate peer writing mentors to assist with basic writing skills.

The deficits in the area of basic writing among our majors are significant and widespread and must be addressed as intensively as possible. Thus, in addition to training our GTAs to work more effectively with students, we propose funding 3 of our best undergraduate majors to function as peer writing mentors. These students would be available to consult with students on issues of basic writing such as spelling, grammar, composition, organization, pagination, citations, references, etc. Our pool of undergraduate majors contains some very strong writers whose familiarity with the discipline would further enhance their ability to provide meaningful support to students who desire it. Support for each mentor would entail WEC funding at 25% of the TA rate each for Spring 2018, Fall 2018, and Spring 2019 semesters. Expected outcomes include improvement in the quality of the basic writing skills of undergraduate students.

10 *Training 1 GTA to work with the department liaison on all aspects of implementation (data collection, analysis, organizing workshops, assessment of program impacts, etc.).*

Training of 1 GTA to work with the department liaison in all areas of program implementation.

The amount of labor required to implement this plan is significant and beyond the scope of the department liaison to handle himself. Thus we propose that 50% of GTA's time be assigned to working with the liaison to facilitate the implementation of the steps outlined above. Responsibilities would include conducting an in-depth analysis of the role of writing in our curriculum; compiling a bank of course syllabi and writing assignments, rubrics, etc. that could be easily accessed by faculty; collecting and analyzing syllabi over time to track changes in curriculum structure and writing assignments; collecting and organizing the data needed to track the path of undergraduates through the major; working with GTAs and peer mentors on various issues, etc. Support for this student would entail funding for 50% of the GTA's time. Regarding the expected outcomes, the success of every phase of the project is in some way connected to the work of this GTA.

11 *Best Undergraduate Sociology Student Paper Competition*

Ultimately, to improve student writing there must be a culture shift in the department towards recognizing and celebrating student achievement in sociological writing. Thus, we propose establishing this annual paper completion, the winner of which will receive a \$300 prize (among other things, photo, write-up, etc.) and the runner up(s) of which would will receive a \$100 prize. The outcome of this completion would be the institutionalization of writing in undergraduate student culture.

SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES: FALL 2017-SPRING 2019

SEMESTER	Activities: Instructional and Assessment Support	Personnel and Material	Requested Support
FALL 2017	1. Faculty retreat on mapping writing across curriculum/refining department rubric	Faculty	Lunch \$200
	2. Tour of FAU Writing Center	Faculty	CEW Staff
	3. Faculty workshop on working with GTAs and rubric grading (WAC rubric)	Faculty	Lunch \$200

SPRING 2018	1. Review of Syllabi, Assignments, Teaching Resource Bank Materials. Tracking students path through curriculum data collection	Graduate TA (50%)	GTA Stipend \$2000
	2. Faculty workshop on instructional design/writing assignments design/writing assignments 3. GTA workshop/course on writing and grading 4. Basic Skills Delivery 4. Best Sociology Undergraduate Paper Competition	Faculty Facilitator TBD GTAs Undergraduate Peer Mentors (3) Faculty Subcommittee	Facilitator \$1500 Lunch \$200 CEW Staff \$500 Lunch \$200 \$1000 each = \$3000 \$300 prize runner up \$100
FALL 2018	1. Faculty workshop on assessment of WEC impacts/Refining the rubric 2. GTA workshop/course on writing and rubric grading	Faculty and Facilitator TBD GTAs	\$1500 Lunch \$200 CEW Staff \$500 Lunch \$200

	3. Collection and analysis of syllabi and writing assignments	GTA /Liaison	GTA Stipend \$2000
	4. Basic Skills Delivery	Undergraduate Peer Mentors (3)	\$1000 each = \$3000
Spring 2019	1. Teaching Bank, Materials, etc.	GTA	GTA Stipend \$2000
	2. Basic Skills Delivery	Undergraduate Peer Mentors (3)	\$1000 each = \$3000
	3. Faculty Workshop -- Issue TBD	Faculty	\$TBD
	4. Best Sociology Undergraduate Student Paper Competition	Faculty Subcommittee	\$300 Prize Runner Up \$100
Two Year Plan (2017-2019)	REQUEST SUPPORT TOTAL = \$22,700.00	\$20,600.00	

In sum, the WEC meetings of 2016-2017 initiated a departmental discussion about what constitutes core sociological writing skills, where we are succeeding and failing in the delivery of those skills, and how to improve the delivery of writing skills. These discussions will have to be continued during the implementation phase with the goal of creating some general consensus on the delivery of skills through curriculum mapping and instructional design. Some general consensus will need to be built regarding the amount of writing, types of writing, assessment and feedback on writing, and use of GTAs at the various course levels. At the same time, faculty independence and control over course objectives, content, and assessment will be vigorously maintained. Reconciling these goals, i.e., creating some consistency while maintaining individual autonomy will depend on strong faculty participation in all aspects of the process.

SECTION SIX: PROCESS USED TO CREATE THIS WRITING PLAN

How, and to what degree, were stakeholders in this unit (faculty, instructors, affiliates, teaching assistants, undergraduates, others) engaged in providing, revising and approving the contents of this Writing Plan?

The contents of this writing plan include the input of roughly 170 undergraduate majors and 14 department affiliates who were surveyed regarding their views on writing in the major and the delivery of skills. It also includes that of department members, including tenure-line faculty, instructors, and adjuncts whose participation was garnered through the faculty survey and four WEC meetings. A graduate student reviewed all course syllabi for the Spring 2017 semester to compile data on the amount of writing and types of writing done in each course and at each level (2000, 3000, 4000). Some faculty participated in curriculum mapping by sharing data on the amount and types of writing done in their courses. The WEC liaison reviewed and borrowed some ideas from WEC writing plans from the departments of sociology at the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee as well as that of FAU's Department of Languages, Linguistics and Comparative Literature at Florida Atlantic University.

The initial draft of the plan was put together by Mark Harvey with the assistance of the department chair, Ann Branaman, and the director/staff at the FAU-CEW. A draft of the plan was shared with faculty (that's what we're doing now dear colleagues) and (will be) revised and based on their input (perhaps very significantly but hopefully not).

SECTION SEVEN: THE WRITING PLAN AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Briefly, please describe the ways the ideas contained in this undergraduate writing plan address the university's student learning outcomes.

According to its strategic plan, the university strives to provide students access to challenging opportunities in higher education, to prepare students to make meaningful contributions in an increasingly complex global society, to encourage reflection on and evaluation of emerging needs and priorities, and to support research and service that enhances economic, human, and cultural development. In pursuing these goals FAU encourages students to think creatively and critically and provides intellectual tools needed for lifelong learning.

In 2015 the university embarked upon its OURI program to better to realize its mission. OURI identifies six specific student learnings outcomes:

SLO 1: Knowledge. Students will demonstrate content knowledge, core principles, and skills.

SLO 2: Formulate Questions. Students will formulate research questions, scholarly or creative problems with integration of fundamental principles and knowledge in a manner appropriate to the discipline (this learning outcome is a requirement of A.I. research and inquiry curriculum grants).

SLO 3: Plan of Action. Students will develop and implement a plan of action to address research and inquiry questions or scholarly problems.

SLO 4: Critical Thinking. Students will apply critical thinking skills to evaluate information, their own work, and the work of others.

SLO 5: Ethical Conduct. Students will identify significant ethical issues in research and inquiry and/or address them in practice.

SLO 6: Communication. Students will convey all aspects of their research and inquiry (processes and/or products) in appropriate formats, venues, and delivery modes.

The ideas contained in this writing plan will enhance the ability of the department to contribute to the realization of each of these SLOs. Student knowledge of core principles and skills will benefit from a more structured program design, more consistent expectations regarding writing across courses, and being required to write more. Student ability to formulate questions will be enhanced through the adjustments to program and course design that will require them to write question-driven research papers in all 4000 level course. Skill development at the 2000 and 3000 levels will ensure that students have the basic skills needed to perform this task at the 4000 level. Student ability to develop and implement a plan of action will be developed through the writing of longer and more integrated research papers. Student critical thinking will be further developed as students move beyond mere exposure to new ideas and develop the skills necessary to ask and answer sociological research questions. The conduct of original research will expose students to the ethical issues at play sociological inquiry. Finally, student communication skills will be enhanced through assignments that require them to present their work in various formats.

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APPENDIX 1 BLOOM'S TAXONOMY "SIMPLIFIED" FOR SOCIOLOGY

	EXPOSURE		Skill Building		Intensive	
	<i>Knowledge</i> <i>Recall/facts</i> basic concepts	<i>Comprehension</i> <i>Basic Understanding of</i> in a text	<i>Application</i> <i>Apply</i> knowledge, techniques	<i>Analysis</i> <i>Examine in detail</i> classify, identify causes, make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations.	<i>Synthesis</i> <i>Create</i> something information in a new way, proposing alternative solutions	<i>Evaluation</i> <i>Justify/defend</i> making judgements about validity and quality of work
Definition						
Actions	Recognize, identify	Discuss, Explain	Demonstrate, categorize, interpret	Categorize, organize, relationships	Devise, propose hypothesis, propose	Argue with evidence and theory
Assessment	Multiple choice, definitions	Short answer (paragraph)	Journal entry (1-2pg)	Reports on debates, e.g. climate change(4-5pg)	Substantive alternative Research Paper (10pgs)	Research Paper (10pgs)

APPLICATION OF TAXONOMY TO SKILLS IDENTIFIED BY FAU SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

1. Critical reading

	EXPOSURE		Skill Building		Intensive	
	<i>Knowledge</i> ID argument, evidence Dist bt fact vs opinion Dist bt scholarly and non-scholarly	<i>Comprehension</i> Summarize main ideas	<i>Application</i> Demonstrate comp by applying ideas to novel cases Use concepts to interpret data	<i>Analysis</i> ID basic sociological elements, i.e. question, method, findings, implications ID argument, evidence ID underlying assumptions	<i>Synthesis</i> MAYBE THIS IS NOT INTENSIVE? Critique arguments, Offer alt interpretation of race	<i>Evaluation</i> Defend interpretations Integrate concepts and data
Skills						
Assessment	Multiple choice, definitions	Short answer (paragraph)	Journal entry (1-2pg)	Reports on debates (4- 5pgs)	???	???

2. Argumentation

	EXPOSURE		Skill Building		Intensive	
	<i>Knowledge</i> ID argument of others i.e., what it is	<i>Comprehension</i> Explain argument of others i.e., what it means	<i>Application</i> Argue using concepts Clear thesis statement Clear def. of terms Logical narrative	<i>Analysis</i> Break down causal arguments of others into constituent parts Explain links between argument and evidence	<i>Synthesis</i> Synthesize others to make your own argument Support argument with evidence	<i>Evaluation</i> Critique arguments of others Defend your argument vs alternatives
Skills						
Assessment	Multiple choice, definitions	Short answer (paragraph) Outlines	Journal entry (2-4pgs)	Reports on debates (4- 5pgs)		

3. Analytical

	EXPOSURE		Skill Building		Intensive	
	<i>Knowledge</i> Dist bt data and argument Recog quantitative data vs qualitative data Dist bt methods	<i>Comprehension</i> Discuss uses of quantitative data vs qualitative Explain purpose of different methods Explain limits of methods/data	<i>Application</i> Apply a method to address problem Develop hypothesis and measures Collect data Analyze data/empirical patterns	<i>Analysis</i> Explain method of analysis in work of others How authors link concepts and data How authors make comparisons	<i>Synthesis</i> Review lit. to develop own framework for analysis Collect data Explain empirical patterns/ variation using sociological concepts	<i>Evaluation</i> Draw accurate conclusions from data Defend method against likely critiques
Skills						
Assessment	Multiple choice, definitions	Short answer (paragraph)	Small project (e.g., your backyard)	Deconstruct 1 or 2 scholarly journal articles	Research Paper (10pgs)	Research Paper (10pgs)

4. Theoretical Framework

5. Evaluative

6. Reflexive