

Critical Thinking through Writing (CTW) Initiative Annual Report AY 2009-2010

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Section 1: Executive Summary

As part of its SACS re-affirmation process, Georgia State University was required to prepare a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The University's QEP, the Critical Thinking through Writing Initiative (CTW), aims to improve the critical thinking and writing abilities, as defined by the respective GSU learning outcomes, of undergraduate students. Faculty are encouraged to use active learning strategies, coupled with short, frequent, focused assignments that require written responses, to engage students continuously throughout the semester and to provide students with more feedback than traditional strategies provide. The CTW Initiative has encouraged a university-wide transformation of undergraduate instructional practices in a manner that is virtually unparalleled among large research institutions. It serves as evidence of our commitment to devoting significant resources and energy to the continuing goal of improving student learning outcomes.

As evidence of this commitment, the University Senate approved a university-wide graduation requirement that undergraduates pass two Critical Thinking through Writing courses in the major. This requirement, approved by the University Senate in April of 2007, took effect for all students entering fall term of 2009 and thereafter. Each CTW course is instructed by CTW-trained faculty, contains assignments that focus on critical thinking as demonstrated through writing and that constitute a significant portion of the course grade, and have a maximum 25 to 1 student/instructor ratio. The five colleges offering baccalaureate degrees each adopted their own strategy to achieve the student-to-instructor ratio. The College of Arts and Sciences chose to cap enrollment at 25 students per CTW course, whereas the Colleges of Business, Education, Health & Human Sciences, and Policy Studies trained graduate students as CTW Consultants to assist in any CTW course in order to meet the 25 to 1 student to instructor ratio.

The following accomplishments have been realized during the 2009/2010 AY, the first official year of the CTW Initiative:

- Offered 375 sections of 117 CTW approved courses which enrolled a total of 8466 students and were instructed by 292 separate CTW trained faculty members. Of the courses offered, 42 were offered for the first time in fall and spring semesters 2009 and 2010. See Appendices A, B, and C for complete list of CTW courses offered in 2009/2010.
- Petitioned for and were allotted space and funding to create a joint Critical Thinking through Writing and Writing Across the Curriculum collaboration center which will open in August 2010 and provides a technology rich environment to serve the needs of CTW training, CTW course development, and CTW consultant conferences.
- Catalogued the courses for each major's CTW requirement (117 courses in total), revising and adapting CTW major requirements to meet the needs of departments as determined by pilot year experience.
- Revised course titles for all CTW courses in the catalog and in GoSolar to reflect their association with the initiative. See Appendix D for changes.

- Created and maintained a table in Banner which updates students individual CTW course needs based on their major
- Designed and revised various assignments to both operationalize the definition of, and foster, critical thinking
- Developed, revised, and tested rubrics, and other methods, designed to measure levels of critical thinking
- Incorporated new methods of teaching and assessing student learning, including use of The Online Writing Environment
- Updated the Online Writing Environment to link with the university course rolls to make the system more easily accessible for students and faculty.
- Initiated a research project aimed at using writing samples in the Online Writing Environment to test student critical thinking across the university.
- Instituted monthly workshops for Ambassadors focusing on areas of difficulty discussed in the pilot year CTW departmental reports.
- Worked with Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS) leaders to create a better system of reporting for BIS majors and started working toward developing an assessment framework for BIS as a whole.
- Surveyed faculty, consultants, and students in CTW courses
- Set policies to address the needs of departments wishing to add, remove, or modify existing CTW courses.
- Trained CTW Ambassadors to submit their first official CTW departmental reports in the WEAVE system as outlined in the reporting plan established in the QEP document.
- Trained CTW consultants to work with CTW courses
- Restructured the CTW Leadership team to streamline the administration of the CTW initiative, adding former CTW coordinators to the leadership team and adding new members to make the team more representative of the university at large.

As we complete our first year of CTW requirement, our community continues to evolve, learn from, and adapt to the needs of our students, developing our mission to look closely at how GSU students think, how the way we ask them to think affects their understanding of the subject matter, and how we might improve both as a result of those insights.

Section 2: Organizational Structure

The Critical Thinking through Writing Initiative has been a university-wide effort. Below is a description of the entities responsible for implementation and management of CTW.

2.1 CTW Leadership Team

The CTW Leadership team manages the initiative as a whole. Its director (George Pullman) reports directly to the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. CTW Leadership team members are responsible for monitoring the growth of the initiative, anticipating

difficulties that might arise, and assisting in the creation of policy. In pilot years, membership on the leadership team was limited to administrative faculty. In the 2009/2010 AY the CTW directors revised the CTW Leadership team to include several CTW Ambassadors who had formerly acted as CTW Coordinators, Ambassadors chosen to help other Ambassadors develop the CTW initiative. The addition of these new members to the leadership team, many of whom not only guide CTW in their respective departments but also teach the CTW courses, broadened the scope of the committee and gave the committee an better view of the initiative. Below is a list of the members in AY 2009/2010:

- ✓ Bill Bogner – CTW Ambassador Managerial Sciences
- ✓ David Cheshier – Chair, Department of Communications
- ✓ Mary Finn—Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness
- ✓ Shelby Frost – CTW Ambassador Economics
- ✓ Jennifer Lawrence—Associate Director, Critical Thinking through Writing Initiative
- ✓ Peter Lindsay—Director, Center for Teaching and Learning
- ✓ Spencer Middleton – CTW Liaison for Health and Human Sciences
- ✓ Teri Peitso-Holbrook – CTW Ambassador for Early Childhood Education
- ✓ Therese Poole – CTW Ambassador for Biology
- ✓ George Pullman—Director, Critical Thinking through Writing Initiative
- ✓ George Rainbolt—Chair, University Senate Committee on Admissions and Standards
- ✓ Marti Singer—Director, Academic Assessment
- ✓ Brian Thoms – Chair, Undergraduate Assessment Committee

2.2 CTW Directors

The Director (George Pullman) and Associate Director (Jennifer Lawrence) organize and schedule CTW Ambassador workshops; create and distribute surveys of students, CTW consultants, and CTW instructors; monitor course listings, titles, offerings, and enrollment; monitor the budget, especially compensation for CTW instructors and CTW consultants. They assist with setting objectives; monitor implementation to assure that objectives are being met; provide training to CTW consultants and CTW faculty (as requested); distribute information about the CTW Initiative to the university community; collaborate with faculty across the university to develop research projects and assist in the expansion of initiatives geared toward improving thinking and writing among undergraduates; provide and support users of The Online Writing Environment. They also work with the Director of Academic Assessment and the Chair of the Undergraduate Assessment committee to prepare Ambassadors to transition from the original CTW reporting mechanism to WEAVE.

2.3 CTW Ambassadors

The CTW Ambassadors are faculty leaders chosen by department chairs to represent their respective degree majors for the implementation of CTW Initiative. The CTW Initiative funded 59 CTW Ambassadors, at least one ambassador from every department, at a rate of \$2,500 per year, for a total of \$147,500. In cases where a department was particularly large or diverse as to require additional support, departments could appoint more than one CTW Ambassador. See Appendix E for a complete list of CTW Ambassadors for 2009/2010 and their funding.

The following are the Ambassador's roles and responsibilities:

- Attend University-level Workshops offered by CTW coordinators
- With input of department and or chair, identify courses to be designated CTW and assure that CTW component of course is identified in all syllabi and in the CTW assignments
- If assigned by department chair, submit course materials for CTW approval through the General Education Sub-committee approval process
- With input & consultation with department chair, identify instructors teaching CTW courses
- With input from dept and or chair, develop an assessment and reporting plan for CTW initiative
- With input from department and/or chair, assure that a person responsible for assessment of CTW is identified
- With input from department and/or chair, prepare faculty for CTW instruction and assessment
- Assure that department plan specifies how the CTW component will be assessed and reported
- With input from chair, assure that the courses are taught regularly and appropriately staffed
- Assure that the faculty assess the CTW courses and develop an action plan
- Provide feedback to the University regarding the practice of CTW in department/majors.
- Prepare annual CTW report (including the requested assessment information) and submit it to General Education Sub-committee (now the Undergraduate Assessment Committee or UAC). In some departments this assessment report may be prepared by the assessment coordinator for that department and not by the CTW Ambassador.

2.4 CTW Consultants

The CTW consultants work with their respective courses as discipline-specific tutors. Consultants must be graduate students studying within the discipline to which they are assigned. The CTW Initiative funded 85 graduate student CTW consultants at \$2,000 per position per semester during the 2009/2010 academic year. Courses were required to have an enrollment exceeding a 25/1 student-to-instructor ratio for each consultant position. 100 CTW courses received funding for CTW consultants, and all tolled, CTW consultants were paid \$200,000 by the university for their services in CTW courses. See Appendix F for a complete list of CTW consultants and their pay for 2009/2010.

The following are the CTW Consultant's responsibilities:

- Help students with drafts of CTW assignments, providing feedback and helping students learn to think critically about the material in the course

- Meet with students to discuss course content knowledge
- Work to improve student critical thinking skills within the discipline, helping them learn to think like a member of the discipline
- Work an average of 8 hours per week with their course
- Attend at least one class meeting and may be expected to attend more
- Familiarize themselves with course materials
- Serve as tutors (not be expected or asked to grade or teach)

2.5 Undergraduate Assessment Committee

The Undergraduate Assessment Committee (UAC) [formerly known as General Education Assessment Sub-committee] reviewed and approved department/degree CTW plans. UAC along with the Director of Academic Assessment was responsible for reviewing the CTW Ambassador's Annual Reports as presented in WEAVE Online to identify assessment of student learning outcomes specifically for critical thinking and writing. See Appendix N for their analysis of the 2009/2010 CTW annual reports.

Section 3: CTW Accomplishments

The CTW requirement went into effect in fall of 2009. In the first official year of CTW, consisting of fall 2009 and spring 2010 semesters departments across the university illustrated their preparedness to meet the needs of this truly broad-based initiative, offering CTW based instruction to over 1/3 of the undergraduate student population. In AY 2009/2010, CTW courses enrolled a total of 8466 students in 375 sections of 117 CTW approved courses and were instructed by 292 separate instructors.

3.1 CTW Course Information

CTW Courses Offered 09/10

In the fall of 2009, 145 sections were offered of 73 CTW courses. 30 of these courses were taught as CTW courses for the first time in fall semester. These courses enrolled 3550 students and were taught by 121 separate instructors.

Table 1: Breakdown of fall 2009 CTW courses by college

College	Courses offered	Sections	Student Enrollment
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies	4	6	248
Arts and Sciences	53	89	1625
Education	2	7	131
Health and Human Sciences	7	11	424
Robinson College of Business	7	32	1122
Totals	73	145	3550

See Appendix A for complete list of CTW courses offered in fall 2009

In the spring of 2010, 180 sections of CTW courses were offered representing 86 CTW courses. Of these courses 12 were taught as CTW courses for the first time. These courses enrolled 4015 students and were taught by 133 separate instructors.

Table 2: Breakdown of spring 2010 CTW Courses by college

College	Courses offered	Sections	Student Enrollment
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies	4	7	258
Arts and Sciences	57	116	1784
Education	4	7	217
Health and Human Sciences	10	16	548
Robinson College of Business	11	34	1208
Totals	86	180	4015

See Appendix B for a complete list of CTW courses offered in spring 2010.

In summer semester 2010, 50 sections of CTW courses were offered representing 31 CTW courses. These courses enrolled 901 students and were taught by 38 separate instructors.

Table 3: Breakdown of summer 2010 CTW courses by College

College	Courses offered	Sections	Student Enrollment
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies	2	2	41
Arts and Sciences	20	32	399
Education	1	1	28
Health and Human Sciences	0	0	0
Robinson College of Business	8	15	433
Totals	31	50	901

See Appendix C for a complete list of CTW courses offered in summer 2010.

Thirteen CTW courses have not yet been offered. All of these courses are 4000 level courses, with the exceptions of JOUR 3560 and GRD 3910 new CTW courses to be offered in the fall 2010. See Appendix G for a list of CTW courses not offered in 2009/2010 and explanations for why they could not be offered.

3.2 CTW Policies

Several policies have been implemented to guide the CTW initiative. In the 2008/2009 pilot year, CTW instituted the following policies developed in response to concerns raised by the college advisors and in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Admissions (Scott Burke), the Associate Provost for Academic Programs (Tim Renick), the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness (Mary Finn), chair of the University Senate Committee on Admissions and Standards (George Rainbolt), Director of Academic Assessment (Marti Singer), Director of CTW (George Pullman), and Director of Web Services (Tim Woltering). Specifically, academic advisors were concerned about the impact of CTW graduation requirement on transfer students.

A. Transfer Credits

The majority, but not all, of the CTW courses evolved from established courses in the major that were previously equivalent to courses offered at other institutions. However, CTW courses at GSU are built upon an approved university-wide definition of critical thinking and undergo the approval process described previously in this report. Thus, to assure the integrity of the CTW graduation requirement and consistency in the evaluation of course equivalency, all courses that have been directly equated to GSU courses designated as CTW effective fall 2009 will be equated to upper division electives for that

subject area (i.e., as 3099 or 4099). Transfer credits should no longer be automatically equated to CTW courses, as the course content and structure are normally specific to Georgia State (see University Catalog Section 1430), and equivalencies to CTW courses are rare.

B. Tracking CTW Course Designations

Administrators of the CTW program are responsible for monitoring changes in each academic department's CTW course offerings. This will be accomplished by the maintenance of a catalog of all active CTW courses approved for each degree major and their effective date of approval. If departments intend to modify their CTW course offerings--for example, remove the CTW designation from an approved CTW course--they need to notify the CTW Director of such action and its effective date. Departments are required to review and update all University Catalog information regarding its CTW courses annually at a minimum to assure its accuracy. Articulation agreements for course equivalency with regard to transfer credits also should be reviewed annually.

C. Appeals for CTW Transfer Credit

Students who wish to petition for CTW transfer credit should follow the transfer credit petition procedures established for each college and/or department, with decisions about CTW course equivalents made in consultation with the appropriate department's CTW Ambassador and/or the department chair.

D. Appeals to Waive CTW Graduation Requirement

Such appeals will follow the route outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (Section IV. B. 8):

Appeals of other university-level academic rules and graduation requirements will be made in the first instance by the Academic Director of Student Retention.

- b) If the petition is denied, the student may appeal to the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee, a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Admissions and Standards. The student must appeal in writing and within 10 business days of being notified of the decision of the Academic Director of Student Retention.
- c) The Academic Director of Student Retention will copy the Chair of the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee on all letters to students notifying them of results of their petitions. Every semester, the Academic Director of Student Retention will distribute to the Senate Committee on Admissions and Standards a report that indicates (at a minimum) the number of petitions filed, the number granted, and the number denied. Any member of Admissions and Standards may review the documents of any petition when there is a legitimate educational interest.

The following policies additional policy was developed during the 2009/2010 academic year to address the addition, alteration, or deletion of CTW courses.

E. Policy Regarding the Addition/Modification/Removal of CTW Designation to Courses

The underlying principles of the development and adoption of this policy are to assure that:

- Student progress toward graduation is not unduly delayed.
- Degree programs retain direct control over subject matter and degree design.
- Assignments within CTW courses contain CTW student learning outcomes that can be effectively measured and responded to by the degree major.

Process for Submission

The CTW Leadership Team receives requests to add, modify, or remove a CTW course from department chairs and recommends a course of action to Undergraduate Assessment Committee (UAC).

Criteria for Review

In all instances the CTW course must retain the following requirements as stipulated in the Senate motion:

1. It has at least three credit hours.
2. It contains assignments that focus on critical thinking as demonstrated through writing.
3. For purposes of this motion, “assignments that focus on critical thinking as demonstrated through writing” are assignments that use writing to help students develop the “wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions needed to effectively identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments and truth claims; to discover and overcome personal prejudices; to formulate and present convincing reasons in support of conclusions; and to make reasonable, intelligent decisions about what to believe and what to do.” (Bassham, Irwin, Nardone & Wallace, *Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction* (McGraw-Hill, 2005) page 1.) Typically, students will have the opportunity to revise at least one assignment during the semester.
4. These assignments together should constitute a substantial percentage of the course grade.
5. It has a maximum of a 25/1 student/instructor ratio. Should a CTW class have more than 25 students, the instructor will receive assistance. If a CTW class enrolls 51-75 students, the assistance of two people would be needed, and so forth. (See Senate motion, section 3.)
6. It is taught by a CTW-trained instructor. (See Senate Motion, section 4.)

In addition to the above, requests will be reviewed with consideration given to the following criteria:

- the addition/modification/removal of CTW course is based on assessment of data on student learning outcomes; however, the CTW Leadership Team recognizes that degree programs have other considerations as well.
- the addition/modification/removal of CTW course include provisions to assure that students on previous catalogs can complete their requirements without undue delay.
- the addition/modification/removal of CTW course assures that at least two CTW courses remain in that major and are offered regularly.
- the addition/modification/removal of CTW courses proceed through the appropriate approval processes (e.g., Curriculum Committee) required at the department and/or college level if necessary.
- the addition/modification/removal of CTW course has a positive impact on existing CTW Plan for the department.
- the addition/modification/removal of CTW course is part of action plan formulated and based upon reflections in previous CTW Ambassador Annual Reports.
- the addition/modification/removal of CTW course does not result in an excessive number of courses to track or result in excessively small enrollments, such that the course is at risk of cancellation or lack of CTW trained faculty to teach them.
- the addition/modification/removal of CTW course includes assignments that are small, frequent, and provide opportunities for feedback to, and revision by, students enrolled.

3.3 CTW Funding

The vast majority of the funding for the CTW Initiative is directed toward instructional support. To capture the interest and efforts among talented educators and to provide financial incentive to pursue lines of research into teaching and learning, summer funds have been provided to at CTW Ambassador(s) from each of the undergraduate majors. Additional funding in the form of graduate student support (CTW Consultants) has been provided in all colleges to assure the 25:1 Student-to-instructor ratio. The College of Arts and Sciences opted to hire full time instructors to support the CTW Initiative, thus no CTW funds go to support CTW Consultants in Arts and Sciences. The initiative funded 85 graduate student writing consultants in 2009/2010.

The majority of resources allotted to the Critical Thinking through Writing Initiative have been used to fund faculty participants, such as CTW Ambassadors, CTW Directors, and CTW new faculty hires. The initiative funded 59 faculty ambassadors in 2009/2010 and 4 new faculty positions in Arts and Sciences.

Table 4 displays the distribution of funds by college. A breakdown of the entire budget for AY 2009-2010 can be found in Appendix H.

Table 4: CTW Funding by College in 2009/2010

College	Ambassador Pay	Consultant Pay	New Faculty Hires	Totals
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies	7,500	26,000	0	33,500
Arts and Sciences	82,500	0	192,000	274,500
Education	12,500	18,000	0	30,500
Health and Human Sciences	15,000	54,000	0	69,000
Robinson College of Business	32,500	102,000	0	132,000
Totals	150,000	200,000	192,000	539,500

The following charts offer comparisons of funding to CTW sections offered and students taught.

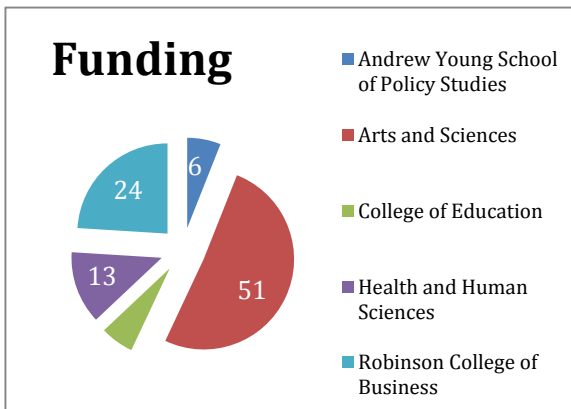


Figure 1: CTW Funding by College

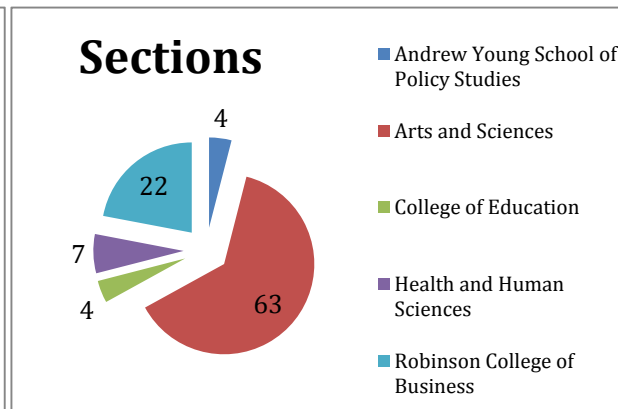


Figure 2: CTW Sections Taught by College

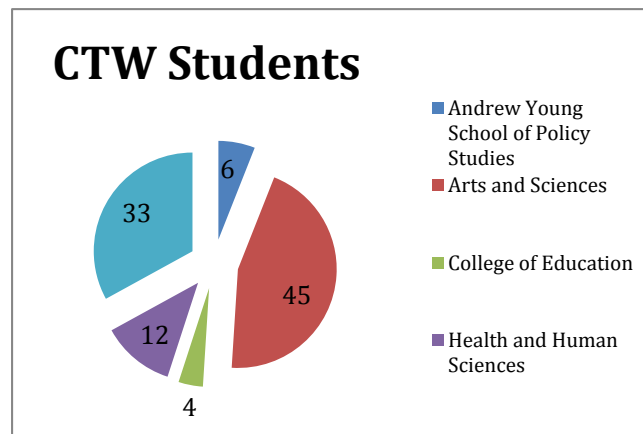


Figure 3: CTW Students Taught by College

As the charts above illustrate, the funding model for CTW has appropriately addressed the needs of each college. While the College of Arts and Sciences receives over 51% of the funding, it also offers over 60% of the sections and teaches 48% of the students. The Colleges of Business, Education, and Health and Human Sciences as well as the School of Policy studies all have similarly proportional breakdowns.

3.4 Distribution of Information

To prepare students, advisors, and the faculty at large for the integration of the CTW graduation requirement, the CTW Initiative was promoted to the GSU community and the larger community.

A. Georgia State University Community

The directors of the CTW initiative worked with Ambassadors to hold departmental training meeting when requested. In the 2009/2010 year, CTW directors held training sessions with the departments of Economics, English, and International Business.

B. Larger Community

- AACU Poster Presentation

On October 2009 directors George Pullman and Jennifer Lawrence offered a poster presentation at the AACU conference.

- FYE Conference

In February 2010, George Pullman, Jennifer Lawrence, Brennan Collins, and Nia Hydel presented at the First Year Experience Conference in Denver, Co. Our presentation focused on work that we are doing with Writing Across the Curriculum and the Freshman Learning Communities to create an environment of critical thinking and writing that begins from the time students enter the university and follows through until their final classes.

- EGC Presentation

In August 2010, Jennifer Lawrence traveled to East Georgia College to discuss CTW. EGC was in the process of going through accreditation and was presented with our QEP as a model for how to institute their own. Jennifer gave an hour presentation on CTW to the entire faculty at EGC and then met with the EGC QEP task force for another hour to discuss CTW and offer advice developing a QEP based on the model we have created.

3.5 Faculty Workshops

Directors of the CTW initiative held several training workshops for CTW Ambassadors in the 2009/2010 academic year. Below is a list of the workshops offered in the 09/10 AY. For a complete list of CTW workshops offered, see our website: www.gsu.edu/ctw/workshops

A. Fall Workshop

On September 24th, 2010, the CTW initiative held its annual Ambassador meeting. At this conference-style meeting, Ambassadors each presented 10 minute presentations on the status of CTW in their department. Ambassadors were arranged in panels so that other Ambassadors could choose to view the presentations they felt would be most influential to CTW in their own departments. Also, this year, we invited several people

from around the university to share interesting research and administrative endeavors, as a means of encouraging Ambassadors to collaborate with one another on developing research programs in their own departments. These speakers included: Shelby Frost, Associate Director of CTL for Technology; Marika Lamereax, Psychology CTW Faculty member and creator of the CTW writing lab in Psychology; Brennan Collins, Associate Director of Writing Across the Curriculum; and Eric Friginal, CTW Faculty member in Applied Linguistics working with the CTW corpus study. See Appendix J for the agenda.

B. Ambassador Workshops

In 2009/2010 year, CTW Ambassadors were required to attend 2 CTW one hour workshops. Below is a list of the workshops and the dates they were offered. For a list of attendees, see our website at www.gsu.edu/ctw/workshops

Ambassador Workshops

CTW Monthly Workshops 2009/2010

Session 1: CTW Rubrics

Monday, September 21st, 2009 (3:00)

Thursday, September 24th, 2009 (3:30)

Session 2: Faculty and Student Resistance

Monday, October 5th, 2009 (3:00)

Thursday, October 8th, 2009 (3:00)

Session 3: Definitions of Critical Thinking

Monday, November 2nd, 2009 (1:00)

Thursday, November 5th (3:00) Location TBA

Session 4: CTW Assignments

Monday, January 18th, 2010 (3:00)

Thursday, January 21st, 2010 (3:00)

Session 5: Research Findings

Thursday, February 4th, 2010 (3:00)

Monday, February 22nd, 2010 (3:00)

Session 6: Working with CTW Consultants

Monday, March 15th, 2010 (3:00)

Thursday, March 18th, 2010 (3:00)

C. Spring Reporting Workshop and WEAVE training

In collaboration with Marti Singer, Director of Assessment for Academic Programs, and Brian Thoms, Chair of the Undergraduate Assessment Committee, the CTW directors

offered 8 training sessions for the WEAVE reporting system. In these sessions, CTW faculty were trained to use the WEAVE system and discussed their first official CTW reports. CTW WEAVE Workshops took place at the following times:

Session 7: CTW WEAVE Reports

Monday, April 19th, 2010 (9:00)

Monday, April 19th, 2010 (11:00)

Tuesday, April 20th, 2010 (1:00)

Tuesday, April 20th, 2010(2:00)

Wednesday, April 21st, 2010 (1:00)

Wednesday, April 21st, 2010 (3:00)

Thursday, April 22nd, 2010 (9:00)

Thursday, April 22nd, 2010 (11:00)

For a list of attendees, see our website at www.gsu.edu/ctw/workshops

3.6 Changes to Initiative

In the 2009/2010 AY, the CTW initiative underwent several key changes in response to the growth of the initiative and recognized needs of the CTW Ambassadors and Faculty.

A. CTW Leadership Team Expansion:

CTW Leadership team members are responsible for monitoring the growth of the initiative, anticipating difficulties that might arise, and assisting in the creation of policy. In pilot years, membership on the leadership team was limited to administrative faculty. In the 2009/2010 AY the CTW directors revised the CTW Leadership team to include several CTW Ambassadors who had formerly acted as CTW Coordinators, Ambassadors chosen to help other Ambassadors develop the CTW initiative. The addition of these new members to the leadership team, many of whom not only guide CTW in their respective departments but also teach the CTW courses, broadened the scope of the committee and gave the committee an better view of the initiative. See section 2.1 for a list of the members.

B. Online Writing Environment updates

In 2009/2010, the Online Writing Environment was used by many departments for their CTW courses, and as the initiative develops, more departments are showing interest in the Environment. To adapt to the needs of current users and to prepare for an influx of future CTW users, the CTW director worked with the University to update the Online Writing Environment and link it directly to course rolls. In the past, faculty had to create CTW courses in the Online Writing Environment and have students locate and create

accounts. Now, students will have easy access to the Online Writing Environment through PAWS and many departmental and faculty websites, and once they reach the login, they will be able to login using their GSU student logins and select their course from the list of courses they are taking in the current semester. The new interface is much more user friendly, and it should make the system more approachable for both students and faculty members.

C. Switch to WEAVE

As established in the QEP document, CTW assessment must be reported in the WEAVE system. In the pilot years of CTW, the director established two reporting mechanisms that would allow CTW Ambassadors to work through their reports and plans in a public manner, with the aim of helping them work through the experience together. For the first official year of CTW, the initiative moved to formal reporting and began reporting in WEAVE. To ease the Ambassadors' transition into WEAVE reporting, the CTW directors worked with the Director for Academic Assessment and the Chair of the Undergraduate Assessment Committee to train Ambassadors on the WEAVE system.

Section 4: Faculty and Student Response to CTW Pilots

4.1 Faculty Response to CTW Pilots

At the end of fall semester 2009 and spring semester 2010, CTW faculty were asked to complete a CTW faculty survey. The survey was conducted online. For a copy of the survey, see Appendix K.

Faculty were informed of the survey through an email from the CTW directors and through contact with their ambassadors. All CTW faculty were asked to participate in the survey, 252 total, but only 57 faculty opted to take part.

The table below illustrates faculty responses to four important components of the survey: the CTW assignment's effectiveness at improving student thinking in the discipline, the assignment's effectiveness at improving writing in the discipline, the assignment's effectiveness at improving student understanding of the material, and the CTW rubric's effectiveness in assessing student critical thinking.

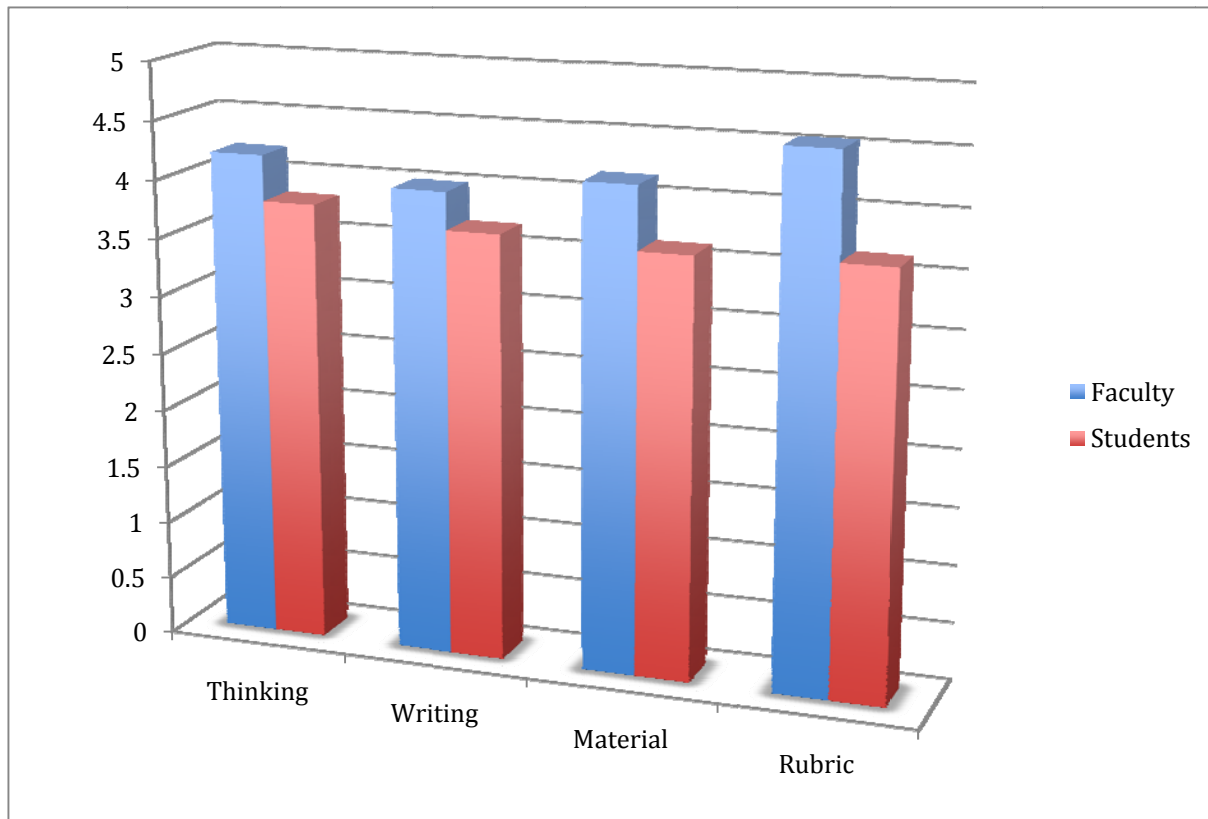


Figure 4: CTW Faculty Perception V. Student Perception of CTW Assignments and Rubrics

The table above illustrates that while the CTW faculty tend to perceive the CTW assignments and rubrics as effectively improving student thinking in the discipline, writing in the discipline, and understanding of the course material, students seem less convinced of the CTW assignment's and rubric's effectiveness. These differences in perception may result from the faculty's greater understanding of and willingness to embrace the CTW initiative, as the discussion of overall student perception below illustrates.

4.2 Student Responses to CTW Pilots

At the end of fall semester 2009 and spring semester 2010, students were asked to complete a CTW student survey. The survey was conducted online and has IRB approval. For a copy of the survey, see Appendix L.

Students were informed of the survey through their professors, and they were offered a 10% off bookstore coupon for completing the survey. All CTW students were asked to participate in the survey, 8466 total, but only 271 students opted to take part.

Overall, students tended to rate the affects of CTW on their student experience in the mid to high 3 range, out of five. The following charts illustrate student perception of improvement in the areas of thinking in the discipline, writing in the discipline, and understanding course

material after completing CTW assignments. Note that there is no data from Andrew Young School of Policy studies because no students from that school responded to the CTW survey.

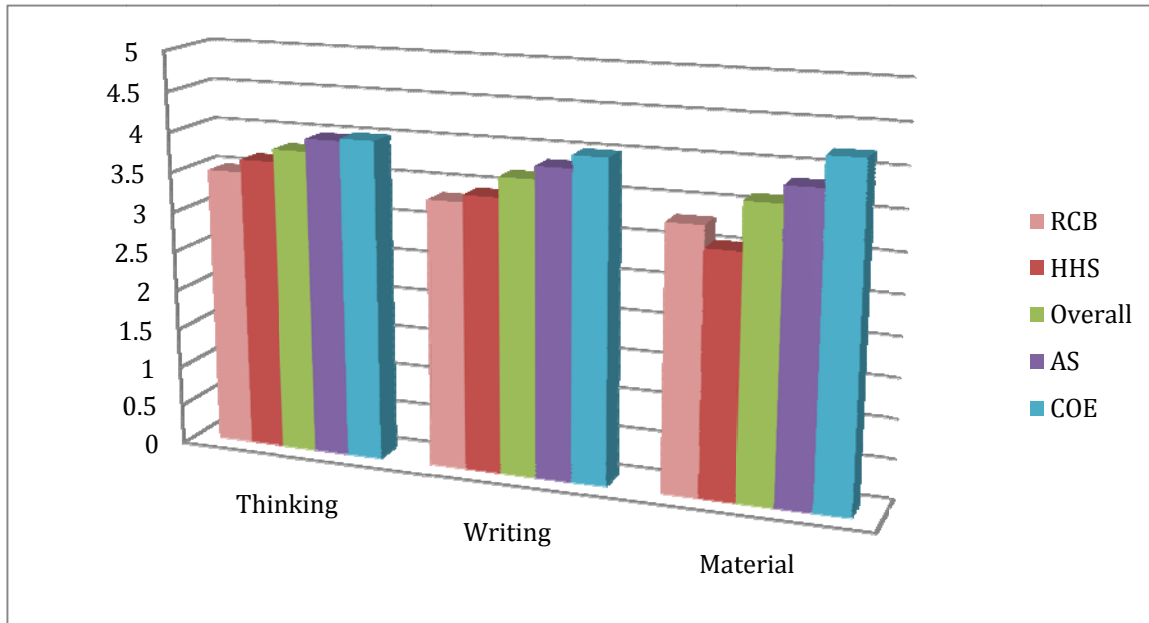


Figure 5: CTW Student Perceptions of Assignment's Effectiveness in Improving Thinking, Writing, and Content Knowledge by College

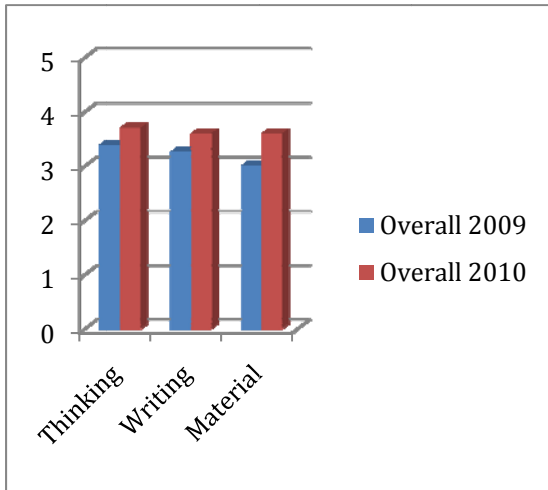


Figure 6: Student Perceptions by Years

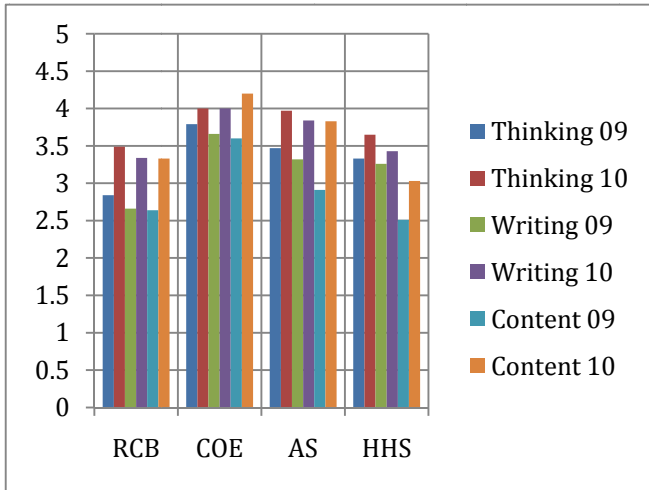


Figure 7: CTW Student Perceptions Comparison by College

As the charts above suggest, students in all colleges seem to be showing an increased appreciation for CTW assignments and their value for improving thinking, writing, and comprehension of course content. While Business students perceive the CTW assignments as less effective than those in other colleges, comparison of their perceptions in 2009/2010 with their perceptions in the pilot year, 2008/2009, suggest that students in the college of business are beginning to feel that the CTW assignments have become more effective in increasing their

thinking, writing, and understanding of content. Of course, students responding to the 2008/2009 survey are not necessarily the same students who responded to the 2009/2010 survey; however, similar numbers of students responded in both years.

Because we have such a small percentage of respondents to the CTW Student Survey, we find the student comments to be helpful in understanding their overall perception of the initiative. The survey illustrates that many of the students who have negative perceptions of the initiative feel that either the assignments were too demanding or that the assessments used to respond to the assignments did not fairly consider the student's beginning knowledge base. Positive comments, tend to suggest that while students felt challenged by the new CTW assignments, they understood the value in the assignments. Below are some sample comments from students and averages of student responses.

Positive Student Comments

1. This class improved my writing skills. I found it different and relevant to learn about a subject through writing about it rather than memorization. It was more about comprehension, which in my opinion is a better way to LEARN a subject instead of just doing well in a class.
2. This course has been a defining point in my career as a student in the Fine Arts program at GSU. The course helped me understand the current position of the art world and taught me information that I can use to further my career as an artist.
3. I really liked this class and I really enjoyed working on the critical writing piece. At first I was sad because I didn't think I could do it but with the revisions of each paper I got better and I really learned from the process.

Negative Student Comments

1. The Critical Thinking was very helpful, however the amount of points that were taken off due to APA errors seemed to be a bit extreme. These papers count 15% of my grade and the grades do not accurately reflect my ability to think critically as a nurse. The grades more accurately represent my confusion about APA. Even using three sources, my book, the corrections from my book, and apa on line did not help. I understand the importance of citing and not plagiarizing, but do not think that my grade should be affected as negatively due to APA errors. This is not an English class and we did not get the kind of education about APA that we would have in an English class. Yet the papers were graded as if we did.
2. I did not like my CTW class at all! it was extremely difficult and felt the course outline, time frame, and course load was too much for EMERGING students in this area who have no PREVIOUS experience in this field. I hope to pass this class because I put my best foot forth and still feel I won't do well. But let's hope that is not the case. yes I think these types of classes are important but not for students to just be thrown into them with no previous introduction or grace for grading on the assignments.
3. I believe that this class schedule was not the best. All the writing assignments were given out passed the 2/3 point of the semester. It is too much writing crammed at the end. The first two months there were no writing assignments at all. Also, I think it's important to start the final paper within the first two months as well.

Section 5: CTW Annual Reports

5.1 WEAVE

In the pilot year, CTW Ambassadors reported their findings in the GSU developed content management system. This system had many positive points, among them were the transparency of the system, as Ambassador reports were easily available to departments, and the ability to ask discussion-based questions. While this system worked well for the pilot year, the CTW leadership team in consultation with the CTW directors and the Director of Academic Assessment determined that the 2009/2010 CTW reports should be presented in the WEAVE format, both to be consistent with other forms of academic reporting across the university and because we had originally planned to use weave in our QEP statement.

The move to WEAVE was problematic because only 11 of the 59 Ambassadors had experience using the system. Further, the directors' were initially very concerned that the structure of WEAVE would prohibit the incorporation of discussion-based responses to assessment. However, the Director of Academic Assessment was able to work with the developers of WEAVE to reconfigure the system and allow for the addition of discussion-based questions. She and the Undergraduate Assessment Committee also worked with the CTW directors to train CTW ambassadors on the new system, and although the several of the 2009/2010 reports failed to meet the standards for reporting that we had anticipated, the CTW Ambassadors did all manage to transition to the new system, and we had reports for 100% of the CTW programs.

For a list of the discussion-based questions added to the WEAVE system in 2009/2010, see Appendix M.

5.2 Academic Assessment Director and UAC Response to CTW Reports

The Director of Academic Assessment and the Undergraduate Assessment Committee responded well to the CTW reports at large. They were particularly pleased with the Ambassadors' incorporation of direct measure findings in the 2009/2010 report. The CTW Assessment Report finds that CTW reports showed significant improvements in reporting measures and findings, tracking change, and discussing impact of findings. That said, the report illustrates that CTW reporters are not consistently reporting information in all of those areas and that the CTW directors, the Director of Academic Assessment, and the Chairs of UAC need to continue to work together to improve training for reporters and to build on the progress reporters made in 2009/2010.

The Assessment Report was able to document some important developments in the CTW Initiative. The following table, taken from the CTW Assessment Report, illustrate that the CTW reporters feel that CTW initiatives in their departments have made some significant improvements in student thinking and writing.

Overall Impact

Student Improvement	20	39%
Faculty Development	17	33%
Extended to Dept.	15	29%
Improved Assignments	6	12%
Improved Rubrics	3	6%
Faculty Enthusiasm	3	6%
Too soon to Tell	3	6%
Improved Feedback	3	6%
Improved Course	1	1%

As this table illustrates, 39% of departments have evidence to suggest that CTW is helping to improve student thinking and writing. This data supports the CTW faculty perception, as represented in the CTW Faculty Survey in figure 4 above, that the CTW Assignments are helping to improve student, thinking, writing, and understanding of course material. Further, 33% of reporters have evidence to suggest that the CTW initiative has helped in faculty development. Of course, the CTW directors would like to see these percentages improve over the next couple of years, but the fact that 20 of the 51 reporters see student improvement as an impact of the CTW initiative is encouraging.

For a copy of the complete 2009/2010 CTW Assessment Report, see Appendix N.

Section 6: Reflections and Action Plan

6.1 Reflections

The first official year of the Critical Thinking through Writing graduation requirement ended successfully thanks to the continued dedication of the Ambassadors and the University community at large. Over 8000 students were enrolled in CTW courses in 2009/2010, more than 1/3 of the entire undergraduate student body at GSU. Departments across the university worked with the CTW office to ensure that courses were offered frequently, that they met the enrollment requirements, and that the courses offered were well taught and were the correct courses for their majors. Ambassadors did a wonderful job of continuing to train faculty and graduate students, and they were able to move, with little difficulty, to reporting in a new system. Additionally, Ambassadors continued to improve CTW in their departments by collaborating with their fellow ambassadors and by attending multiple CTW workshops offered by the CTW office.

Student and faculty response to the CTW survey shows that the community is starting to embrace the initiative, although there is still a great deal of work to be done. Further, the CTW Assessment report illustrates that the CTW directors, in conjunction with leaders in the assessment community at GSU, need to continue to work with Ambassadors on making

connections between the data they are collecting for their classes and their larger programmatic goals.

6.2 Action Plan

As CTW moves into its second year at Georgia State, the directors plan to continue many of the procedures we enacted in the 2009/2010 year. For example, CTW Ambassadors found the annual September workshop and the monthly follow-up workshops to be wonderful opportunities to collaborate with their fellow ambassadors and to learn from what others are doing across the university. We have kept those in the 2010/2011 academic year, and we have broadened them to include interested faculty and CTW consultants.

In 2009/2010, we plan to continue working with faculty across the university to develop research into the CTW initiative. Currently, the directors are working with Eric Frignal from Applied Linguistics on a Corpus study using the Online Writing Environment and papers from CTW courses. Students using the Online Writing Environment in spring 2011 will be asked to fill out a consent form allowing their writing to be a part of the study.

In August 2010, the CTW initiative and the Writing Across the Curriculum program received space in Aderhold. Already, we have used this space to enable us to expand our training for graduate students working with CTW, and this space has allowed us to expand our monthly workshops to include CTW faculty and graduate students. We are currently meeting with programs across the university to begin collaborating on new ways to support CTW courses, and to encourage research in to CTW courses, assignments, and student productions. This space has also enabled us to host meetings between the CTW Ambassadors who report for their departments and the report reviewers, giving both the reviewers and the reporters a better understanding of the complexities involved in reporting data on this initiative. We believe that these interactions will help the reporters have a better understanding of what the reviewers need them to consider when they are creating the reports and that they will give the reviewers a better understanding of the difficulties they face gathering the data, and thus be able to offer more in depth reviews of the reports they provide.

By the end of the 2010/2011 academic year, we hope to have strengthened the Ambassadors' understanding of the reporting mechanisms and worked with them to develop stronger programs that will not only enable student improvement but that will also give them a better understanding of the areas their programs need to develop in order to continue and expand student improvement. We also hope to expand the scope of our new space. CTW is collaborative in its nature, and we working to make our space one that will help us expand upon that tendency. We are continuing to encourage CTW faculty to engage in research on the CTW initiative, and we hope that they will be able to use this space and to work with the directors to conduct meaningful research on the program.

Section 7: Appendices