

USER'S GUIDE

ONTARIO COLLEGE WRITING EXEMPLARS

A WINDOW ONTO WRITING AT COLLEGE

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Contents

Introduction	1
Questions and Answers about the Ontario College Writing Exemplars	3
Activities with OCWE	9
<i>Activity 1: Rating Practice with pre-rated samples</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Activity 2: More Rating Practice</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Activity 3 (Alternative to Activity 2): Investigating Similarities and Differences in Sets of OCWE-rated Exemplars</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Activity 4: Practising Rating with Un-rated OCWE Writing Samples</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Activity 5: Practising Rating with Locally Collected Writing Samples</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Activity 6: Expanding Familiarity with Levels and Writing Types</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Activity 7: Rating Practice with Short Report Exemplars</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Activity 8: Becoming Familiar with Complex Writing Types</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Activity 9: Considering Different Writing Contexts and Circumstances</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Activity 10: Looking Ahead to Higher-year Writing Tasks</i>	<i>26</i>
Forms	29

Introduction

This Guide gives users of the *Ontario College Writing Exemplars* a capsule of key information about the *Exemplars*.

It also allows users to replicate the rating process undergone by the *OCWE* team.

The purpose of this replication activity is

- To validate the *OCWE* descriptors and levels
- To collect information that may assist in refining *OCWE*
- To serve as a springboard for individual users and institutions to discuss college-level writing in relation to their own perspectives and circumstances
- To solicit suggestions for further activities with *OCWE* that would broaden familiarity with the document and assist other stakeholders.

The activities in this Guide are carried out “hands-on” with a wide range of Exemplars. For purposes of familiarization and discussion, required portions of *OCWE* may be downloaded and copied for individual users or group participants.

Each activity requires a facilitator and a small group of up to eight participants. Multiple groups may be used for larger sessions, especially for activities to consider different types and contexts of college writing.

The facilitator requires no special familiarity with *OCWE* to conduct an activity session and may be as much an investigator as any other group member. The facilitator has the responsibility to prepare the session and to conduct the activity and discussion.

Most of the activities in this Guide are relatively restricted in scope, requiring a session length of 45 minutes to one hour. Sessions in which multiple small groups participate or multiple sets of Exemplars are considered (especially those of complex writing types) may require an extended time limit of 90 minutes to two hours.

Group participants with common interests may be recruited through individual departments or through associations or professional development centres.

For the sponsors of *OCWE*, an important goal is the collection of responses to the document, so follow-up by the group facilitator with individual participants and submission of the feedback form at the end of this Guide would be greatly appreciated.

The *OCWE* Project can be contacted through

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Questions and Answers about the Ontario College Writing Exemplars

What is the Ontario College Writing Exemplars?

The *Ontario College Writing Exemplars* is a document designed to assist teachers in college and secondary school, students, parents, and counsellors in understanding what writing at college is like. It contains

- 70 authentic student writing samples, each rated according to the *OCWE* rating system
- Appendix of writing samples representing the wide variety of college writing tasks
- *OCWE* Rating System: Four text-type specific Descriptors and a common Rating Scale
- Rating Scale aligned to Canadian Language Benchmarks
- Information about the context of college writing
- Information about ESL writing
- Statements of tasks and comments on writing samples
- Glossary.

What factors affected the development of the Exemplars?

The development of this document was affected by

1. The context of college writing:

- The role of English/Communications faculty members or departments in colleges
- The description and evaluation of writing within colleges in terms of skills outcomes
- Rubrics to describe writing currently in use within colleges

- The role of ESL in colleges
 - The nature and consequences of secondary school curriculum reform.
2. A collaborative identification of writing types
- Three first-year text-types: memos, short reports, research essays
 - One higher-year text-type: formal technical reports.
3. Resource Documents:
- *Ministry of Education Secondary School English Exemplars*
 - *Canadian Language Benchmarks.*

Who participated in the development of the Exemplars?

Funder: School/College/Work Initiative, a joint body of College Presidents and Directors of Education (find out more at www.gotocollege.ca)

Sponsor: Heads of Language of Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (find out more at www.hol.on.ca)

Faculty and Students from:

Niagara College	Humber College
Mohawk College	Fanshawe College
Sault College	Durham College
Centennial College	

District School Board Partners:

District School Board of Niagara	Toronto Catholic School Board
Hamilton Wentworth District School Board	London District Catholic School Board
Algoma District School Board	Durham District Board of Education

What were the phases of the Exemplars project?

- Identifying the types of writing samples to focus on
- Collecting hundreds of writing samples
- Establishing the Rating System
- Applying the Rating System by holistically rating the writing samples
- Identifying Exemplars by consensus
- Adding supports for the Exemplars
- Validating the Exemplars
- Promoting and distributing *OCWE*.

How was the OCWE Rating System established?

- By identifying stakeholders' needs
- By examining models of writing descriptors and exemplars
- By determining three main text types
- By drafting specific descriptors for these three text types
- By using familiar categories of description: Content, Organization, Style, Format
- By drafting a generic rating scale applicable to any text type, based on four levels of performance
- By using traditional categories of rating, including Mechanics
- By using authentic student writing at every stage to establish and confirm features and levels of writing.

How was the OCWE Rating System applied?

Each of the 70 rated Exemplars in this document was rated

- Holistically: based on an overall impression of the writing, taking into account the variables of the Rating System and balancing strengths and weaknesses to make a final determination of level
- Consensually: each Exemplar in the document was agreed to by a team of eight, comprised of college English/Communications faculty

and an ESL representative, taking into account and discussing divergent scores

- Descriptively: without regard to evaluative terms or categories, such as pass/fail or grades or percentages.

Why are there four levels of OCWE rating?

- Transparency to stakeholders, development of a common language, and facilitating a seamless transition from the secondary to the college level are all goals of the *OCWE* project.
- *OCWE* follows the pattern of four levels of performance established in the Secondary School English Exemplars
- An even number of levels forces raters to avoid a neutral or mid-level rating
- Negative connotations of pass-fail are avoided.

What supports are there for understanding the Exemplars?

- Each Exemplar is contextualized by a two-part statement of task. The first part describes the overall writing task in terms of the college system's generic skills requirements, and the second part encapsulates the particular writing assignment
- Each Exemplar is accompanied by a brief commentary on its significant features in relation to the text-type Descriptor
- The *Exemplars* document contains explanatory information about the nature and place of writing in colleges and the province-wide required outcomes
- The document contains an explanation about the place of ESL in the college system and the importance and use of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks*
- The *Exemplars* document contains a 58-item Glossary explaining terminology. Items relevant to the ESL context are distinctly identified.

What's happening with validating, promoting, and distributing the Exemplars?

- School/College/Work Initiative and College Vice-Presidents Academic are funding the widespread distribution of the *Exemplars* to every secondary school in Ontario
- The *Exemplars* is also available for downloading at www.hol.on.ca
- The *Exemplars* has been strongly supported in initial presentations to Ministry of Education representatives, secondary school stakeholders, and college faculty
- Completing the feedback form at the end of this User's Guide is a direct way to participate in the validation and improvement of *OCWE*
- Plans are in place for needs assessment leading to tailored professional development activities related to *OCWE* for secondary school stakeholders in every region of the province.

How can different users of the Exemplars benefit from this document?

- Secondary school teachers and counselors can develop a greater understanding of college as a destination for their students and choose and develop materials to guide students' preparation
- Teachers and students can appreciate that college writing is applied, rather than personal, and see how it requires the use of critical thinking skills
- Parents can help students make informed decisions about college and its demands
- College faculty, in program areas and English and Communications areas, can clarify and communicate about their expectations of student writing
- College faculty and departments can be guided in the development of writing assignments
- College departments and divisions can set standards of student writing, by determining correspondences between *OCWE* levels and institutional requirements for grades or pass levels
- College students can gain concrete information about writing levels and requirements by examining authentic samples of other students' writing and communicate better with college faculty about expectations.

Activities with OCWE

Activity 1: Rating Practice with pre-rated samples

Purpose:

To gain familiarity with the *OCWE* approach and levels.

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Memo Descriptor and Rating Scale
- Individual copies of memo exemplars: Memos about Work on an Airport Parking lot (pp. 35, 38, and 44), **with Level ratings concealed**
- Coloured pens or post-its
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder.

Steps:

- Briefly read over the relevant section of the Rating System (i.e., the Memo Descriptor and the common Rating Scale)
- Individuals may highlight contents as they choose (facilitator should time this activity --three or four minutes)
- Facilitator hands out hard copy or displays Exemplars that have been rated by the *OCWE* team
- Individual group members holistically rate these samples by referring to the Rating System Descriptor and Scale (holistic rating is a quick activity which should be given a brief time limit by the facilitator—five minutes or less)
- To avoid being negatively influenced by numbered levels of ratings, colour coding levels and using markers or post-its may help (e.g., level 4, purple; level 3, pink; level 2, blue; level 1, yellow)
- Group members write a holistic level rating number on each sample (or use colour coding)

- Facilitator records the group's ratings (anonymously) on flipchart, e.g., four ratings of Level 4, two ratings of Level 3, two ratings of Level 2
- Group discusses interesting patterns or variances in ratings (e.g., unanimity, wide spread in rating levels, strong disagreements) to identify what particular features of the writing samples are being responded to and influencing rating choices
- Facilitator records key features on flipchart.

Analysis and Conclusions:

- Participants may refer to Rating System Descriptor and Scale to help clarify important features according to *OCWE*, resolve differences in ratings, and work towards consensus
- Where consensus cannot be achieved in the group, facilitator may record key issues for later investigation or discussion.

Activity 2: More Rating Practice

Purpose:

To extend familiarity with *OCWE* approach and levels by practising rating with other sets of Exemplars.

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Memo Descriptor and Rating Scale
- Individual copies of sets of Memo Exemplars **with Level ratings concealed**
- Coloured pens or post-its
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder.

Steps:

- Participants briefly read over the relevant section of the Rating System (i.e., the Memo Descriptor and the common Rating Scale)
- Individuals may highlight contents as they choose
- Facilitator should time this activity (three or four minutes)
- Facilitator should pre-identify the focus of rating practice and choose among the following sets of Memo Exemplars:
 - Set 1—the two highest levels of rating, pp. 34 and 37
 - Set 2—the two highest levels of rating, pp. 32 and 43
 - Set 3—the second-highest level of rating, pp. 36 and 42
 - Set 4—the second-lowest level of rating, pp. 50 and 55
 - Set 5—“boundary” levels of rating (top-half and bottom-half of Rating Scale), pp. 36, 42, 50, and 55
 - Set 6—the lowest level of rating, pp. 60, 62, and 64

- Facilitator may pre-identify the focus by surveying group members in advance as to their areas of interest or concern
- Depending on time available for activity and group size, facilitator may identify more than one set and assign each set to a different group
- Facilitator and group should follow process for rating, recording, discussing, and concluding as outlined in Activity 1, above
- If different groups examine different sets, sufficient reporting/recording time for each group must be allotted
- Facilitator should clarify concept of “Category Killer” in *OCWE* text-type Descriptors.

Analysis and Conclusions:

- Participants may wish to refine their understanding of key differences between “neighbouring” levels of Exemplars
- Participants may wish to consider the ways in which two quite different Exemplars are appropriately rated at the same level.

Activity 3 (Alternative to Activity 2): Investigating Similarities and Differences in Sets of OCWE-rated Exemplars

Purpose:

To investigate comparisons within and between identified *OCWE* levels (this activity is an alternative to further rating practice with sets of rated Exemplars).

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Memo Descriptor and Rating Scale
- Individual copies of sets of *OCWE* rated Memo Exemplars
- Coloured pens or post-its
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder.

Steps:

- Facilitator chooses one or more set from this list according to types of interest or concern to group members:
 - Set 1—similarities and differences between the two highest levels of rating, pp. 34 and 37
 - Set 2—similarities and differences between the two highest levels of rating, pp. 32 and 43
 - Set 3—comparison within the second-highest level of rating, pp. 36 and 42
 - Set 4—comparison within the second-lowest level of rating, pp. 50 and 55
 - Set 5—distinctions at key “boundary” levels of rating (top-half and bottom-half of Rating Scale), pp. 36, 42, 50, and 55
 - Set 6—different ways in which the lowest level of rating may be achieved, pp. 60, 62, and 64
- Choice could focus on differences within or between levels or on content of exemplars

- Group members identify key features that they think account for ratings
- Facilitator records and groups together these characteristics and categorizes these clusters of features.

Analysis and Conclusions:

- Facilitator and participants may compare their groupings of key features with *OCWE* Descriptor and Rating Scale, to investigate *OCWE* for areas of attention and importance.

Activity 4: Practising Rating with Un-rated OCWE Writing Samples

Purpose:

To deepen skill in holistic rating by practicing with a range of un-rated writing samples of different types.

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Rating Scale (no Text-type Descriptors available for Appendix samples)
- Individual copies of sets of *OCWE* Appendix Writing Samples; while these samples are un-rated, they do represent a range of performance levels
- Coloured pens or post-its
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder.

Steps:

- Facilitator selects one or more sets of Appendix writing sample types, according to needs and interests of group members, length of the writing samples, and the time available for the activity:
 - Set 1—Summaries (Early Childhood Education-related content)
 - Set 2—Sales Letters (Business-related content)
 - Set 3—Horticulture Flyers (Horticulture-related content)
 - Set 4—Interview Reports (Sociocultural-related content, group writing activity)
 - Set 5—Legal Case Briefs (Law program-related content)
 - Set 6—News Stories (Journalism-related content)
- Facilitator hands out hard copy or displays chosen set of writing samples
- Individual group members holistically rate these samples by referring to the Rating Scale (facilitator should identify a suitable brief time limit for this activity, depending on the length of the writing samples)
- To avoid being negatively influenced by numbered levels of ratings, colour coding may be used (e.g., level 4, purple; level 3, pink; level 2, blue; level 1, yellow—using marker or post-its)

- Group members write a holistic level rating number on each sample (or use colour coding)
- Facilitator records the group's ratings (anonymously) on flipchart, e.g., four ratings of Level 4, two ratings of Level 3, two ratings of Level 2
- Group discusses interesting patterns or variances in ratings (e.g., unanimity, wide spread in rating levels, strong disagreements) to identify what particular features of the writing samples are being responded to and influencing rating choices.

Analysis and Conclusions:

- Facilitator and group members may wish to discuss ratings in an attempt to achieve consensus and to identify key features in samples that have influenced individuals' ratings
- Participants may attempt to outline key features of the particular writing sample type according to the categories Content, Organization, Style, Format that are employed in *OCWE* Descriptors for other text-types
- Participants may compare their identified key features from their particular perspectives depending on degree of familiarity with the writing sample type (for example, general reader/English teacher, English faculty attached to program area, program faculty teaching writing sample type)

Activity 5: Practising Rating with Locally Collected Writing Samples

Purpose:

To practise holistic rating according to the *OCWE* system, using collected writing samples from own students.

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Rating Scale and Descriptor for chosen Text-type (for beginning practice, Memo samples are most practical because of length)
- Individual copies of set of collected writing samples, with individual student and teacher identifications removed
- Approximately 20 Memo writing samples is a suitable set size to begin developing skill in holistic rating
- Completed waiver forms from students authorizing the use of their work in case of future institutional plans to distribute anchor papers, publish grading guides; see page 29 of this *User's Guide* for a sample form
- Coloured pens or post-its
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder.

Steps:

- Facilitator distributes hard copies of writing samples
- Individual group members holistically rate these samples by referring to the Rating System Descriptor and Scale (holistic rating is a quick activity—should be given an appropriately brief time limit by the facilitator depending on the number of samples being rated)
- To avoid being negatively influenced by numbered levels of ratings, colour coding levels and using markers or post-its may help (e.g., level 4, purple; level 3 pink; level 2 blue; level 1 yellow)
- Group members write a holistic level rating number on each sample (or use colour coding)
- Facilitator or recorder records the group's ratings (anonymously) on flipchart, e.g., four ratings of Level 4, two ratings of Level 3, two ratings of Level 2.

Analysis and Conclusions:

- Facilitator and group might focus on results that show wide divergence in ratings (strong disagreements, individual tendencies to rate high or low, samples about which no consensus can be achieved)
- While group members are developing holistic-rating skills, facilitator should repeatedly draw group away from concepts of letter grades, percentages, and pass-fail and focus on the descriptive emphasis of holistic rating
- Once members are efficient at holistic rating, groups may consider institutional implications or prescriptive consequences of ratings (for example, is Level One a pass in the local Department or Program? Are there differences in standards across the institution that holistic ratings reveal?)

Activity 6: Expanding Familiarity with Levels and Writing Types

Purpose:

To gain insight into the range of performance in Short Report writing tasks.

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Short Report Descriptor and Rating Scale
- Individual copies of two sets *OCWE* rated Short Report Exemplars, representing the full range of levels and different writing contexts or circumstances (see sets, below)
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder.

Steps:

- Facilitator distributes hard copies of Set 1 (Progress Reports), representing three levels of performance: Level 4 Sample 1 (p. 68), Level 4 Sample 2 (p. 70), Level 3 Sample 2 (p. 87), and Level 2 Sample 3 (p. 105). Three of these progress reports are self-evaluations; two were written in class; and one is by an ESL writer
- Facilitator distributes hard copies of Set 2 (Survey Reports), both at the lowest rating level: Level 1 Sample 1 (p. 119) and Level 1 Sample 2 (p. 123)
- Using the Short Report Descriptor and Rating Scale, participants identify relevant elements from Descriptor and Rating Scale and create lists of additional comments on these six Exemplars to account for the identified ratings.

Analysis and Conclusions:

- Facilitator and participants may wish to consider how the circumstantial variables for the writing of the progress reports (for example, writing self-evaluation, writing in-class) may have affected the writing outcomes
- Facilitator and participants may wish to consider the reasons that quite different pieces of writing may both appropriately be rated at the lowest level.

Activity 7: Rating Practice with Short Report Exemplars

Purpose:

To apply understanding of the *OCWE* Rating System to investigative and analytical Short Report Exemplars.

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Short Report Descriptor and Rating Scale
- Individual copies of one or two sets *OCWE*-rated Short Report Exemplars, **with the rating level concealed**
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder.

Steps:

- Facilitator chooses a set of three Short Report Exemplars on the basis of the focus of the session or interest of the participants:
Set 1 (Comparison Reports—analytical focus): pp. 80, 83, 99, and 115
Set 2 (Survey Reports—investigative focus): pp. 77, 91, and 110
- Participants read over the Short Report Descriptor and Rating Scale
- Participants may highlight contents as they choose (facilitator should time this activity —five minutes or less)
- Facilitator hands out hard copies or displays Exemplars that have been rated by the *OCWE* team
- Group members holistically rate these samples by referring to the Rating System Descriptor and Scale (holistic rating is a quick activity—should be given a brief time limit by the facilitator—ten to fifteen minutes for both sets of Exemplars)
- To avoid being negatively influenced by numbered levels of ratings, colour coding levels and using markers or post-its may help (e.g., level 4, purple; level 3, pink; level 2, blue; level 1, yellow)
- Participants write a holistic level rating number on each sample (or use colour coding)

- Facilitator records the group's ratings (anonymously) on flipchart, e.g., four ratings of Level 4, two ratings of Level 3, two ratings of Level 2
- Group discusses interesting patterns or variances in ratings (e.g., unanimity, wide spread in rating levels, strong disagreements) to identify what particular features of the writing samples are being responded to and influencing rating choices
- Facilitator records key features on flipchart
- Process may be repeated with second set of reports.

Analysis and Conclusions:

- Participants may wish to consider the relationship between the nature of the writing task and the level of performance
- Participants may wish to discuss differences between investigative and analytical reports and compare levels of performance in the two sets collectively
- Participants may wish to focus discussion on one aspect of Short Report text-type Descriptor: Content, Organization, Style, or Format.

Activity 8: Becoming Familiar with Complex Writing Types

Purpose:

To use *OCWE* Research Essay Exemplars to gain insight into how a more complex writing type might vary in its requirements and performance.

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Research Essay Descriptor and Rating Scale
- Individual copies of set of rated Research Essay Exemplars (see sets, below)
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder; multiple groups for a large-scale session.

Steps:

- Facilitator identifies set(s) of Exemplars for activity, depending on needs and interests of group participants and time available for the activity:

Set 1—Formulaic Essay:

Exemplars: Level 4 Sample 1 (p. 136); Level 3 Sample 4 (p. 180); Level 2 Sample 4 (p. 193); and Level 1 Sample 1 (p. 204).

Focus: Each of these essays follows a five-paragraph organizational format with a “blueprint” thesis statement listing main points for discussion. This set of Exemplars shows the range of performance for the text-type across all four levels and shows how it is possible to incorporate research within formulaic parameters.

Set 2—Vocationally-relevant Content

Exemplars: Level 4 Sample 1, “When Good Backs Go Bad” (p. 136); Level 3 Sample 2, “Why Lawn and Garden Pesticides Should Be Banned” (p. 172); Level 2 Sample 1 “Scarcity of Non-Renewable Energy” (p. 183); Level 2 Sample 3, “Non Destructive Testing” (p. 191); Level 1 Sample 6, “Photodynamic Therapy” (p. 229); Level 1 Sample 7, “Kyoto Agreement” (p. 232).

Focus: this cluster of Exemplars shows the range of program-related content handled in research essays through all levels of writing performance.

Set 3—Social-interest Topics

Exemplars: Level 3 Sample 1, “School Uniforms” (p. 166); Level 2 Sample 6, “Immigration” (p. 199); Level 1 Sample 2, “Violence in Sports” (p. 208); Level 1 Sample 3, “Legal Drinking Age” (p. 214).

Focus: this set of Exemplars reflects students’ writing on subjects of personal or popular interest.

Set 4—Academic Essays

Exemplars: Level 4 Sample 3 (p. 148) and Level 4 Sample 4 (p. 159).

Focus: these two Exemplars show the highest level of performance on an academic topic. These samples show the kind of advanced writing assignment that students might occasionally encounter in a general education course, depending on program and curriculum configuration.

- Facilitator distributes hard copies of chosen sets to participants a week prior to session for participants to pre-read the Exemplars
- For a large-scale session, different sets can be pre-assigned to different small groups
- Participants read samples and highlight contents in relation to Research Essay Descriptor and Rating Scale
- When group meets, facilitator guides discussion on the particular focus of the Exemplar set (formulaic, vocational, social interest, or academic).

Analysis and Conclusions:

- Participants may wish to consider the Research Essay text-type and the focus of a particular set of Exemplars in relation to their own course assignments and expectations
- Participants in a large session may wish to compare the rating of Exemplars from different sets (for example, the level of performance with vocationally-relevant content versus social interest content)
- Participants may wish to consider the general differences between applied college-level research essays and essays with a more personal or narrative stance.

Activity 9: Considering Different Writing Contexts and Circumstances

Purpose:

To consider how writing contexts and circumstances may affect performance of different writing types and tasks.

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Memo, Short Report, and Research Essay Descriptors, as required, and *OCWE* Rating Scale or CLB-aligned Scale, as required
- Individual copies of set of rated Exemplars (see sets, below)
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder; multiple groups for a large-scale session.

Steps:

- Facilitator identifies set(s) of Exemplars for activity, depending on the needs and interests of group participants:

Set 1—In-Class Work:

Exemplars: *Memos* Level 3 Sample 4 (p. 39); Level 2 Sample 2 (p. 45); and Level 2 Sample 5 (p. 51) and *Short Reports* Level 4 Sample 2 (p. 70); Level 3 Sample 2 (p. 87); Level 1 Sample 3 (p. 124); and Level 1 Sample 5 (p. 130).

Focus: these clusters of Exemplars allow users to examine the characteristics of writing samples of different types across a full range of levels.

Set 2—Group Submissions:

Exemplars: *Research Essays* Level 2 Sample 1 (p. 183); Level 1 Sample 7 (p. 232), and three un-rated Appendix samples (Interview Reports, pp. 345-374).

Focus: these Exemplars present work completed by pairs or groups of students, to give users of *OCWE* an idea of such college assignments.

Set 3—ESL Writing:

Exemplars: *Memo* Level 2 Sample 8 (p. 57); *Short Report* Level 2 Sample 3 (p. 105); and *Research Essay* Level 2 Sample 6 (p. 199).

Focus: these Exemplars provide a glimpse of college-level ESL writing, whether produced in ESL or non-ESL courses.

- Facilitator distributes hard copies of chosen sets to participants a week prior to session for participants to pre-read the Exemplars
- For an ESL-focused group, participants also pre-read the ESL Writing section of *OCWE*, pp. 19--22
- For a large-scale session, different sets can be pre-assigned to different small groups
- Participants read samples and highlight contents in relation to Text-type Descriptors and Rating Scales (*OCWE* and CLB-aligned)
- When group meets, facilitator guides discussion on the particular focus of the Exemplar set (in-class, group, or ESL work).

Analysis and Conclusions:

- For in-class work, participants may wish to compare the samples with each other and with samples of the same text-type and at the same level completed out of class
- For in-class work, participants may wish to focus on the relationship between particular aspects of the sample (e.g., content, organization, mechanics, format) and the circumstances of writing in-class
- For group work, the un-rated Appendix samples give participants detailed information about group-work processes and provide an opportunity to discuss the quality of this un-rated work
- For the ESL work, ESL specialists may wish to refer in more detail to the *Canadian Language Benchmarks* (find out more at www.language.ca) and to discuss the complexities of holistic rating of ESL writing
- For ESL work, participants may wish to practise holistic rating of their own students' writing samples. See *Activity #5* for guidelines, including the collection of student waivers to authorize use of writing samples.

Activity 10: Looking Ahead to Higher-year Writing Tasks

Purpose:

To investigate features of Exemplars of a higher-year college writing task, in comparison with each other and with a similar first-year task.

Materials:

- Individual copies of the *OCWE* Formal Technical Report Descriptor and Rating Scale
- Individual copies of the four Formal Technical Report Exemplars (pp. 239 - 303)
- Individual copies of set of Short Report Exemplars: Level 4 Sample 4 (p. 80); Level 3 Sample 4 (p. 93); Level 2 Sample 1 (p. 99)
- Flip chart/marker or technical equipment for recording and presenting
- Group(s) of up to eight participants, including facilitator/recorder; multiple groups for a large-scale session.

Steps:

- Facilitator distributes hard copies of the Formal Technical Report Exemplars, Formal Technical Report Descriptor and the Rating Scale in advance of the session
- Facilitator distributes hard copies of selected Short Report Exemplars, above, and Short Report text-type Descriptor in advance of the session
- Participants use the Descriptors and Rating Scale to identify key features of interest or concern to them in the writing samples
- Participants compare the Short Report Descriptor and the Formal Technical Report Descriptor to identify key differences between the two text-types.

Analysis and Conclusions:

- Participants may wish to focus on the Level 1 and Level 3 Formal Technical Report Exemplars and identify concrete strategies by which students might be guided to improve Level 1 performance to Level 3 performance
- Participants may compare the three levels of Short Report Exemplars (above) with the Levels 3, 2, and 1 Formal Technical Report Exemplars to analyze the differences between the first-year and higher-year types of writing task.

Forms



SAMPLE WAIVER

I authorize the use of my writing assignment (s) for purposes of research and discussion by (_____ group) at (_____ institution). I understand that my identity will be treated in confidence.

Student Name: _____ (Please print)

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____



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I. Identification

Please tell us who you are:

- Secondary school teacher
- Secondary school consultant/counsellor/administrator
- Secondary school student/parent
- College English or Communications faculty
- College program faculty
- College administrator
- College student

II. Use of the OCWE document and User's Guide

Please tell us if you followed any of the activities in the User's Guide and how they worked for you:

Activity: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What worked:

What didn't:

What I learned:

What I still need to know:

III. Local Application

Please tell us how you will use OCWE in your own setting (classroom, school, college, or DSB):

IV. General Feedback

What other comments about OCWE would you like to make to the project's sponsors?

Please send your completed form to:

Jim Jones, Chair, Heads of Language of Ontario CAATS
Mohawk College
Box 2034
Hamilton ON L8N 3T2

jim.jones@mohawkcollege.ca

