Literacy Assessment
Collection of Evidence – Plan and Execution for Freshman

A. Evidence Collection Approach for 2012-2013 Assessment Cycle (Fall Collection)
B. Requirements for using Blackboard to perform the Collection of Evidence
C. Approach for the Deployment of the Prompt
D. Steps for Deployment of the Prompt (Milestones for Assessment Coordinator, Teaching Center, IS&T)
E. General Education Literacy Assessment Roadmap – Blackboard Setup Milestones
F. Concern Regarding Student Commitment to Complete the Assignment
G. Communications
   a) Instructor Communications
      Communications to Instructors as part of the Assessment Assignment.
      Instructor Communication - 1
      Message conveyed to Instructors to prepare them for the upcoming Assessment Assignment.
      Instructor Communication - 2
      Message conveyed to Instructors informing them of student non-compliance in completing the assignment.
   b) Student Communications
      Communications relayed to students as part of the Assessment Assignment
      Student Communication - 1
      Message read by Instructor to students during class.
      Student Communication - 2
      Communication sent to students after Instructor read message to class regarding University Accreditation
      Student Communication - 3
      Communication sent to students informing them that Assessment Assignment is now available.
      Student Communication - 4
      Communication sent to students reminding them of assignment deadline.
      Student Communication - 5
      Communication sent to students for non-compliance in completing the assignment.
      Student Communication – 6
      Thank you note sent to students to thank them for their participation in the Assessment Process.
H. Blackboard Instructions for University Assessment – Sent to Students
I. Freshman Prompt – Loaded into Blackboard
J. Freshman Prompt – How to Look and Act Like a Leader
K. Freshman Prompt – Wall Street Journal On-line Audience
L. Tracking Students to Actual Instructor/Course
A. Evidence Collection Approach for 2012-2013 Assessment Cycle (Fall Collection)
   - Deploy prompt to all Freshman students taking English Writing 1.
   - The assignment will be delivered through a faux course created in Blackboard.
   - The essay will not be part of the student’s grade.
   - Prompt will be deployed via a BB Learn assignment.
   - Assignment will be completed outside of class.

B. Requirements for using Blackboard to perform the Collection of Evidence

Deploying an Assignment
   1. Deploy an assignment to Freshman students enrolled in English Writing 1 course sections. Align the assignment to the appropriate Outcomes goal in order to allow Outcomes to collect this evidence.
   2. We need the ability to deploy the assignment centrally – meaning that course instructors themselves will not be responsible for deploying the assignment.
   3. The faux course being created in Blackboard will display on the student’s home page in Blackboard in the My Courses section, indicating they are enrolled in this faux course.
   4. The assignment will be associated to the faux course. The assignment will not be associated with student’s actual Writing Composition course.
   5. The student’s Writing Composition course educator will be engaged to inform their students of the presence of the faux course that they have been “enrolled” in, and the assignment that is due.

Collection of Evidence
   1. Ability to create an Evidence Assessment Project that can “see” and collect evidence of learning from the faux course and the assignments that is deployed.
   2. The Evidence Assessment Project and its associated evidence collection must live in a hierarchical location in Outcomes that facilitates this.
   3. The hierarchy must enable an Assessment coordinator the ability to collect evidence:
      a. from a deployed assignment – as defined above
      b. from other units within the university – when necessary
   4. This requirement can be met if we treat General Education Assessment as a Program at the University Level – a level higher than School units.
C. Approach for the Deployment of the Prompt

- All students who have signed up for **Writing 1** will receive this year’s Literacy prompt.
- Targeted **Writing 1** Course Sections

<table>
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<th>Writing Courses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L59 Writ 100 01</td>
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<td>L59 Writ 100 02</td>
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<td>L59 Writ 100 03</td>
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- The deployment will be delivered through a **faux** course that will be setup by IS&T
  - **Course:** FL2012.L59.WRIT.GEDLIT.F – General Education Literacy Fall 2012 – Freshman
- The assignment will need to be built into the faux course (Assessment Coordinator with the assistance from the Teaching Center. The assignment will not be part of the student’s grade.
- The deployment of the prompt to students will be handled via the Blackboard Learn system through use of the faux course (Assessment Coordinator, Teaching Center, IS&T).
- Assessment Coordinator will approach the **Writing 1** educators - for the purpose of enlisting their help in socializing to their students of this assessment prompt (assignment will appear in Blackboard as a course listing that the student did not sign up for).
- Instructor Communications
  - Develop an official communication to be given to all instructors.
- Student Communications
  - Develop a communication to be sent directly to each of the student, informing them of what, why, when, and what to do if they have questions about this assignment. Including:
    - Include screen shots depicting the Blackboard faux course so the student knows what to expect
    - Directs the student appropriately if they have questions regarding Blackboard, or regarding the prompt itself
  - **Students will work on the assignment outside of classroom.**
- It is advisable to have a few students pilot the “student experience” before deploying the assignment to the masses in order to validate that the assignment is setup correctly, and that the student communications accurately match to the assignment.
D. Steps for Deployment of the Prompt (Milestones for Assessment Coordinator, Teaching Center, IS&T)

1. Identify courses and students who will be involved in the assessment cycle
2. Identify which days the assessment assignment will need to be available to students
3. Inform Student Technology Services (STS) of the assessment window (for phone support)
4. Setup Faux Assessment Course in BB Learn system (IS&T creates course using the Web Admin Tool)
5. Set course to be unavailable to students in BB Learn system
6. Enroll students in the Faux Course in the BB Learn system
   IS&T - Identify all students enrolled in the 16 Writing Composition courses whose enrollment is at a level greater than 6 semesters and enroll them into the faux Blackboard course in BB Learn system.
7. Create Course and student enrollments in the BB Outcomes system
8. Create Evidence Assessment Project in BB Outcomes system
9. Load/prepare/build the assignment into the BB Learn system
10. Set course to be available to Students in the BB Learn system
11. Prepare/finalize Faculty communications
12. Prepare/finalize Student communications
13. Prepare/finalize student “How to” Guide for navigating the assignment in Blackboard
15. Communicate Assessment to Faculty
   Discuss assessment, its importance, the faculty member’s role in the process, and how they can communicate this information to their students.
16. Faculty of each of the university courses communicates information regarding the assessment to their students, its importance, and the timeframe
17. Assessment Coordinator send students a direct communication informing them of the Assessment, and its importance
18. Deliver Course assignment to Students
19. Send Communication to Students informing them the assignment is available
20. Monitor Evidence Assessment in Blackboard Outcomes to ensure a successful collection of Evidence
21. Send periodic communications to students reminding them to complete the assignment
22. Solicit the help of the Faculty to remind student’s to complete the assignment
23. Close the Assignment (set the course to be unavailable to students)
24. Thank faculty and students for their participation
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create Unit Goals</td>
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<td>Create Improvement Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create Improvement Project</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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<td>Align Improvement Project Objectives to Unit Goals</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Define Measures</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create Course Assignment &amp; Align to Unit Goals</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Rubrics &amp; Align to Unit Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create Evidence Assessment Project</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Assessment Project Results</td>
<td>Not started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize Findings</td>
<td>Not started</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. Concern Regarding Student Commitment to Complete the Assignment

Excerpts from various communications:

**Heidi – note to Glen**
I'm a little concerned about one thing in the deployment strategy (well, two related things): that assessment is not being graded and that it is happening outside of class. I understand why that would be Doreen's preference, and it may be fine if handled just right, but together those two things *could* make it hard for us to get enough students to engage seriously in the task at hand, and thus to get a good sample.

In my experience, if instructors are even a bit reluctant when it comes to being "socialized" (and in turn getting their students to do this work seriously) we may not get a good sample. It's very hard to evaluate writing that is done without much commitment. Just my two cents as a former director...

**Gerhild note to Peter**
Jill and I (and other members of the Committee) have several years of experience to draw on when reviewing assessment. This experience suggests:

1. That the assessment essays have to be an integral part of the class. Students can take the assignment outside of the class but all have to participate. We have records from years back which indicate that any kind of voluntary out of class assessment is useless. This does not even mention the parents’ comments we get when we suddenly ask something of their kids which is not part of a course, expects something they do not understand, and is not part of the grade. So, full integration into the course work is vital (including a grade).

2. The instructors have to enthusiastically support assessment and administer it with the full understanding how vital this activity is for teaching and learning at WU, and for our pending institutional self-study and accreditation (2014). If needed I will be happy to meet with the instructors and bring this message home to them.

**Peter - note to Gerhild**
Bob and Doreen are going to set up a meeting with you to discuss the role of assessment in the curriculum and ensure full participation of all freshmen & seniors. I'd be happy to meet with you to discuss this as well. I've asked them to invite you to our mandatory staff meeting on Tuesday, August 28th at 11:00 a.m. to address all of our instructors on the importance of the University Assessment. I'd also be happy to distribute any written statement from you to our instructors and/or students that will impress upon them how important this process is. Of course I'll also be delivering that message, but I thought it might be helpful if the message gets reinforced by you.
Communications

a) Instructor Communications

Instructor Communication - 1

Message conveyed to Instructors to prepare them for the upcoming Assessment Assignment.

Letter to Writing 1 instructors distributed at first staff meeting of the semester:

Beginning in fall 2012, the University Assessment will no longer be administered during Writing 1 class time. Instead, students will be asked to complete the assessment online through Blackboard (bb.wustl.edu), which is replacing Telesis.

We still need your help, however, to ensure a successful deployment of this new online version. Because Writing 1 is the only common course for freshmen, it is our best chance to communicate the importance of assessment and encourage full participation from first-year students.

The Assessment Committee has set up everything in Blackboard, and I will communicate directly with all students concerning what to expect, and when & how to complete the assessment. Your role in this process is simple but crucial. Because successful essays are typically reflective of how the instructor pitches the assessment to students, I ask only two things:

1) Please announce to your class that they are required to take the University Assessment. You can even remind them that participation is an important part of your course and the UA is folded into these participatory expectations. You will receive a written statement from me with your new roster on Friday, and you can simply read that in class if you’d like. It will help, however, if you reiterate what I’ve written and remind them that assessment is an important part of accreditation and curriculum development. Appeal to them as participatory citizens of Wash U.

2) Offer to field any questions concerning the University Assessment prompt once they read it. In this packet, you’ll find a copy of the prompt and corresponding article/data from the Wall Street Journal. As you can see, it’s pretty straightforward, but inevitably students will raise questions. These might include:
   Q: can I use outside research for this?
   A: you’re not prohibited, but you don’t need to. Remember you only need to spend one hour on this essay.
   Q: is it alright if I type my essay in Word document and attach it?
   A: ABSOLUTELY NOT! Please just type in the “Submissions” box as instructed.
   Q: I don’t know what the prompt/article means by xyz...
   A: Just do what you can. It will be fine!
   The answer to this third question will be the answer to almost all questions. If they ask you about tech stuff related to Blackboard, just direct them to student technology services (sts.wustl.edu or 935-7100).

In this packet you’ll find the following – a simple “how to” guide that I will email to your students, the university prompt itself, and a WSJ article along with some demographic data that students will read before responding to the prompt. Please don’t distribute any of this to your students! I’m only providing it so you know what to expect and have the material in case any questions arise.
I can’t thank you enough for your help with this. I realize that you’re being put in a slightly awkward spot since the assessment has little to do with the W1 curriculum, but it is quite important to the university, so please put on your best “official” voice and impress upon your students how vital it is that they 1) take it and 2) take it seriously. If you have further questions about any of this, please don’t hesitate to contact me!

Peter Monahan  
Assistant Director of Writing 1  
Ridgley Hall 216  
pfmonaha@artscl.wustl.edu  
935-5586
Instructor Communication - 2

Message conveyed to Instructors informing them of student non-compliance in completing the assignment.

Hi,

Looks like one of your students didn’t submit a University Assessment essay →. The Assessment Committee is hoping for 100% participation, so I’m going to be contacting him on Monday to offer one last chance. You needn’t do anything special, but I was hoping that after class on Monday (or via email) you might mention that you’re aware he didn’t take the assessment and that I’ll be sending him an email.

I know this puts you in an awkward situation, but my hope is that he will just say, “yes, sorry about that, I’ll do it this week of course!” but there’s always a chance that he will refuse or complain or ask lots of questions. Of course it’s up to you how to handle such a situation, but here are a few potential responses –

1) remind him that participation is an important component of Writing 1, and you expect him to do the assessment.
2) tell him that you know it’s a pain, but it really is important to the accreditation process and it will take less than an hour.
3) tell him that I’m not going to stop emailing him all semester long until he does it, so he might as well just get it over with so that the Assessment Coordinator gets off his back.
4) if he’s really adamant or seems especially annoyed, just tell him to email me. I can answer all his questions.
5) if it’s a matter of nerves, tell him not to worry. Whatever he does will be just fine. It’s painless, ungraded, and anonymous when evaluated.

If he insists he did it, believe him and let it go. There will probably be some system errors, so he can just respond to my email when it’s sent. This is certainly not worth getting into an argument with your student over.

Honestly, this isn’t a huge deal, but if you could just mention it to him, that would be great. I promise, this is the last thing I’ll ask of you. If you’d prefer not to have this conversation with your student for any reason, I would understand of course. Thanks!

I hope all’s well, and the semester is off to a smooth start. Best of luck with everything!

Peter
b) Student Communications

Student Communication - 1
Message read by Instructors to their students during class, describing the Assessment Assignment.

Communication Included:
Purpose of the Literacy Assessment
Assignment timeline overview

Context of the Communication:
To be read by Writing 1 instructors on Friday, Aug. 31:

Dear Instructor,

Once again, thank you so much for help in deploying this year’s University Assessment. We couldn’t do it without your support! If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact me.

Peter

1) Please make the following announcement at the beginning of class on Friday:

“Next week you will be asked to take part in Washington University’s 2012 Literacy Assessment by completing a short essay in response to a common prompt. All students enrolled in Writing 1 are required to complete this assignment, which will be administered online through Blackboard (bb.wustl.edu). This weekend, you will receive an email from the University Assessment Coordinator explaining how to find and complete the assignment, which will appear on your Blackboard page at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 4th. On Tuesday, you will receive an email alerting you that the assignment is available. You will have until midnight on Friday, Sept. 7th to complete this assignment. We ask that you spend no more than one hour on it, and submit work that is your own, in accordance with Wash U’s academic integrity policy.”

2) Here is some additional information in case students raise questions about the purpose and general procedure of the University Assessment:

“Washington University takes its responsibility to students, and the development and assessment of its curriculum, very seriously. The University assesses students’ writing, quantitative reasoning, and critical skills early in their study and then again as they near the end of their studies at the university. The essay you write next week will concern your writing and critical thinking skills and may be shared with the University Assessment Committee (UAC), whose job it is to oversee assessment and accreditation, as well as with other departments on campus. All essays reviewed by the university are handled confidentially.”
Student Communication - 2
Communication sent to directly to students via email after their Instructor read Student Communication - 1 to them in class.

Communication Included:
- Assignment Timeline
- Assignment Background
- How to submit the assignment and the format to be used
- Who to contact in case of questions regarding the actual assignment
- Note to students to save their work periodically
- Attachment: Blackboard Instructions for University Assessment

Context of the Communication:

From: Peter F. Monahan [mailto:pfmonaha@wustl.edu]
Sent: Saturday, September 01, 2012 1:40 PM
Subject: FL2012.L59.WRIT.GEDLIT.F.Merge: University Assessment - Fall 2012

Dear student,

Thank you for taking part in the 2012 Washington University Literacy Assessment. This is a required component of Writing 1, and on Friday your instructor read you a message concerning its importance to our university's accreditation process and curriculum evaluation. With your help, Washington University will continue to improve its curriculum and better serve its students for years to come.

The University Assessment assignment is not yet available for you to complete. On Tuesday, September 4th, you will receive a notification email alerting you that the "Freshman Literacy Assessment - Fall 2012" prompt has appeared on your Blackboard homepage (bb.wustl.edu). Once you receive that notification, you will be able to complete the assignment. At midnight on Friday, September 7th, the "Freshman Literacy Assessment - Fall 2012" link will disappear from your Blackboard page. Therefore, it is imperative that you complete the assignment sometime during this time frame.

Don’t worry if you are unfamiliar with Blackboard. I have attached a detailed set of instructions with this email that you can review before you complete the assignment. The steps in this process are simple, but if you have any questions about Blackboard, please contact Student Technology Services (sts.wustl.edu or 935-7100). I encourage you to visit your Blackboard page (log in with your wustl key) before Tuesday so that you're familiar with it.

The assignment itself is straightforward -- you will read a short article, then write an essay that responds to its arguments & content. We ask that you take only one hour to complete this assignment. That means you should treat it as an essay you would write in class. You needn't conduct any research or spend more than one hour considering the prompt and writing the essay. Your response will be confidential, and you will not receive a grade. If you have any questions about the prompt itself, please contact your Writing 1 instructor.
Three very important considerations --

1) While completing your assignment in Blackboard, you should periodically save your work (see attached Blackboard instructions) in order to prevent any system errors causing a loss of work.

2) Please compose your essay in the "Submissions" box only (see attached Blackboard instructions). DO NOT compose your essay in Microsoft Word and attach it as a file.

3) You are obligated to write this essay yourself and should not receive outside help of any kind. All work that you submit under your name must be yours, and representing someone else's work as your own is a violation of academic integrity. Please consult Course Listings or Bearings for the University's policy on academic integrity.

The next communication you will receive from me will arrive Tuesday, Sept. 4th to alert you that the University Assessment assignment is available on Blackboard. Thank you once again for your role in the 2012 Washington University Literacy Assessment.

Peter Monahan
University Assessment Coordinator
Assistant Director of Writing 1
Washington University.
Student Communication - 3
Communication sent to students informing them that Assessment Assignment is now available.

Communication Included:
- How to navigate to the assignment in Blackboard
- How to submit the assignment and the format to be used
- Who to contact in case of questions
- Reminder to students to save their work periodically
- Attachment: Blackboard Instructions for University Assessment

Context of the Communication:
From: Peter F. Monahan [mailto:pfmonaha@wustl.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, September 04, 2012 10:38 AM
Subject: FL2012.L59.WRIT.GEDLIT.F.Merge: University Assessment - Fall 2012

Dear student,

The "General Education Literacy Assessment - Fall 2012" assignment is now available for you to complete. You will find the University Assessment assignment on your Blackboard page. Please go to bb.wustl.edu and log in using your wustl key. Once you have done so, you'll find a link to "General Education Literacy Assessment - Fall 2012" under "My Courses." Click the link and you will be directed to the University Assessment prompt. I've attached a document to this email that details the steps in this process, so please read it before completing the assignment.

Once again, please remember --

1) While completing your assignment in Blackboard, you should periodically save your work (see attached Blackboard instructions) in order to prevent any system errors causing a loss of work.

2) Please compose your essay in the "Submissions" box only (see attached Blackboard instructions). DO NOT compose your essay in Microsoft Word and attach it as a document file.

3) You are obligated to write this essay yourself and should not receive outside help of any kind. All work that you submit under your name must be yours, and representing someone else's work as your own is a violation of academic integrity. Please consult Course Listings or Bearings for the University's policy on academic integrity.

If you encounter problems with Blackboard, contact Student Technology Services (sts.wustl.edu or 935-7100). For all other questions, contact your Writing 1 instructor.

You have until midnight on Friday, September 7th to complete this required assignment. Thank you for taking part in the 2012 Washington University Literacy Assessment!

Peter Monahan
University Assessment Coordinator
Assistant Director of Writing 1
Washington University
**Student Communication - 4**

Communication sent to students reminding them of assignment deadline.

**Communication Included:**
- Reminder of assignment deadline
- Who to contact in case of questions
- Attachment: Blackboard Instructions for University Assessment

**Context of the Communication:**

**From:** Peter F. Monahan [mailto:pfmonaha@wustl.edu]
**Sent:** Thursday, September 06, 2012 2:11 PM
**Subject:** FL2012.L59.WRIT.GEDLIT.F.Merge: University Assessment - Fall 2012

Dear student,

This is a reminder that you have until midnight this Friday, September 7, to complete the required University Assessment assignment. This process will take no more than one hour, and your participation is essential for the accreditation process and curriculum review at Washington University. This is a **required** assignment for all students enrolled in Writing 1.

I have attached a file to this email that includes detailed instructions on how to find and complete the University Assessment. If you have further questions about Blackboard, contact Student Technology Services (sts.wustl.edu or 935-7100). If you have further questions about the prompt, contact your Writing 1 instructor.

Thank you again for participating in the 2012 University Assessment!

Peter Monahan
University Assessment Coordinator
Assistant Director of Writing 1
Washington University
Student Communication - 5

Message conveyed to Students for non-compliance in completing the assignment.

Context of the Communication:

Dear students,

I’m contacting you because you didn’t complete the University Assessment assignment last week. I’ve been in touch with several of you, and others have talked to their Writing 1 instructor about the situation.

As I said in my previous email, I know that this has been a busy start to the semester, and I understand that there were some extenuating circumstances last week. It is, however, imperative that you complete the University Assessment assignment, so I’m going to provide another chance for you to do so.

On Tuesday morning the University Assessment assignment prompt (“General Education Literacy Fall 2012”) will reappear on your Blackboard page under “My Courses.” I’ve attached detailed instructions to this email on how to find the assignment and submit your essay. If you have questions about the process or any other concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact me. If you experience technical problems, you can also contact Student Technology Services (sts.wustl.edu or 935-7100).

The assignment will disappear from your Blackboard page on Thursday at midnight. If you anticipate problems completing it before then, please let me know as soon as possible.

Thank you once again for participating in the 2012 Washington University Literacy Assessment!

Peter Monahan
University Assessment Coordinator
Assistant Director of Writing 1
Washington University
Thank you note sent to students to thank them for their participation in the Assessment Process.

Communication Included:
Thank you

Context of the Communication:

Dear students,

Well, the University Assessment for fall 2012 has officially concluded, and with your help it’s been a resounding success! Your essays will now be evaluated (anonymously) by a group of faculty who help plan our four-year writing program at Wash U. The assessment shapes our writing curriculum by providing a clearer understanding of student writing across all schools and disciplines.

I wanted to thank you personally and on behalf of the University Assessment Committee for your participation in this effort. Your cooperation has played a vital role in ensuring continued improvement to our curriculum for years to come.

Thank you and have a great semester!

Peter Monahan
University Assessment Coordinator
Assistant Director of Writing 1
Washington University
H. Blackboard Instructions for University Assessment – Sent to Students

Students were not trained in the use of BB but given this set of Instructions to assist them.

## General Education Literacy Fall 2012

### Student Instructions

#### What you will do:

1. **Log into** Blackboard [https://bb.wustl.edu](https://bb.wustl.edu), using your WUSTL Key and WUSTL KEY password. (Chrome or Firefox web browsers are recommended.)
2. **Click** on the course titled “General Education Literacy Fall 2012” under “My Courses.”
3. The Literacy Assessment assignment will appear.
4. **Read** the entire page carefully to get an understanding of this assessment and the assignment.
5. **Click** on the “Freshman Literacy Assessment - Fall 2012” link to begin.
6. **Type** your response directly into the "Submission" box.
7. If you need to save the assignment before submitting, **click** “Save as Draft.” (It is advisable to save your work regularly.) When you are ready to submit, **click** “Submit”.
8. Your submission will appear in the “My Grades” section.

#### What You Will See:

**Step 2:** “General Education Literacy Fall 2012”

**Step 3:** Literacy Assessment Assignment

**Step 5:** Assignment Link

**Step 6:** Submission Box

**Step 7:** Save as Draft or Submit

**Step 8:** My Grades section

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**Note:**

- If you have questions regarding the assignment, please contact your Writing 1 instructor.
- If you have questions regarding the use of Blackboard, you may visit [http://libanswers.wustl.edu](http://libanswers.wustl.edu). Click on Blackboard for students.
- If you need additional help with Blackboard, please visit Student Technology Services (located in Gregg Hall on the South 40), or sts.wustl.edu (click on the Blackboard link on the left.)
I. Freshman Prompt – Loaded into Blackboard

Washington University takes its responsibility to students, and the development and assessment of its curriculum, very seriously. The University assesses students' writing, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking skills early in their study and then again as they near the end of their studies at the university. The essay you write today will concern your writing and critical thinking skills and may be shared with the University Assessment Committee (UAC), whose job it is to oversee assessment and accreditation, as well as with other departments on campus. All essays reviewed by the university are handled confidentially.

Please read through the whole prompt before you begin typing, making sure to take into account all of its instructions. In reading your work, the Committee will consider how well you craft and support the claims you make, and how well you engage with evidence and audience.

Assignment

Please read the article linked below, "How to Look and Act Like a Leader." Then, study the accompanying demographic information about the on-line readership of The Wall Street Journal. Compose an essay that makes a claim about how the writer's knowledge of the WSJ audience may have shaped the subject and style of her article. Support your claims by referring to specific features of the article.

How to Look and Act Like a Leader
WSJ Demographic

Click on the "Freshman Literacy Assessment - Fall 2012" link at the top of this page to begin.

Type your response directly into the "Submission" box.

Please take no more than 60 minutes to complete and submit this assignment.
How to Look and Act Like a Leader
Joann S. Lublin

From: The Wall Street Journal (online)

Savvy executives know the part, act the part and look the part. That's because they exude "executive presence," a broad term used to describe the aura of leadership.

For Janie Sharritt, now a vice president at Sara Lee Corp., an image makeover helped her gain the managerial gravitas that she needed to advance further up the ladder.

In 2005, Ms. Sharritt was a newly promoted middle manager for another consumer-products manufacturer. She preferred to wear a ponytail, scant makeup, khakis, sweaters and loafers. But by taking a "Power of Image" workshop led by image coach Jonna Martin, she got an expert makeover.

Her revamped look included a sophisticated hairstyle, dressy slacks and jackets, pumps, colorful necklaces and extra makeup.

She thinks the changes boosted her self confidence, resulting in faster acceptance of her ideas by senior management. "In the past, [that quick buy-in] wasn't one of the things I was known for," says Ms. Sharritt. She joined Sara Lee four years ago.

Executives with presence act self confident, strategic, decisive and assertive, concludes a study released late last year by the Center for Work-Life Policy, a New York think tank.

Presence plays an increasingly important role as companies grapple with a weak recovery and fewer management layers. "You have less time to make that lasting impression," warns Stefanie Smith, head of Stratex Consulting, a New York coaching firm. Today, 75% of her coaching practice involves enhancing clients' presence—up from 35% in 2007.

Several big businesses, including Intel Corp. and Morgan Stanley, recently launched programs to teach ambitious staffers about executive presence. Rosalind Hudnell, Intel's chief diversity officer, says she created a "Command Presence" workshop for its rising female technical stars last year after realizing they needed extra help selling their ideas within the company. Nearly 200 women at the computer-chip maker have taken the four-hour session.

These mid-level staffers learn how to present effectively through a discussion of "constructive confrontation" and a simulated meeting with an executive audience, according to an Intel spokeswoman.

Ms. Hudnell recalls that her survival long "depended on my being able to command a room." She believes executive presence also involves the ability to command other leaders.

How can polish your presence? For starters, you should pinpoint your strengths and weaknesses. "People are blind to their biggest derailers," says Karen Kaufman, a Philadelphia executive coach.

You could glean additional clues by keeping a journal based on workplace observations of executives with authoritative presence, says James Citrin, a CEO recruiter for search firm Spencer...
Stuart. Imitate their behaviors "that feel comfortable and natural for you," he recommends. Mr. Citrin cites a CEO candidate he recently watched being interviewed by the board search committee at a $10-billion company. Among other things, the prospect "looked the committee members alternately straight in the eye" as he answered their questions "slowly but very clearly."

Formal assistance may make an even bigger difference. It ranges from extensive sessions with an executive coach to voice lessons, presentation training and improvisational acting classes.

Jason Bernstein retained coach Dee Soder in 2009 to bolster his presence while an executive of a midsized technology company in suburban New York. "People who don't know him can miss his high energy and drive because he has such an easygoing style," says Dr. Soder, an industrial psychologist who founded CEO Perspective Group, an executive assessment and advisory firm in New York.

To correct this misperception, Mr. Bernstein says he embraced many of her suggestions. He tried to avoid a monotone in commanding his employees, sit upright during meetings and display powerful confidence at a conference table by marking his territory with a water bottle and notebook.

Dr. Soder also urged him to wave his hand slightly rather than nod his head in agreement when someone else speaks "to show you got it," Mr. Bernstein adds.

"Nodding your head is in some ways a gesture of deference," Mr. Bernstein explains. "It was one of the toughest things I found to work on." He says the executive-presence coaching "helped improve my performance reviews," which soon praised his board-level presentations and leadership ability.

Colleagues also notice flaws in your executive presence. But it's frequently hard to get frank feedback. "You have to take the responsibility to ask," says Gillian Christie, a managing director of a big financial-services firm. She remembers how coworkers at a prior employer only hinted about her tendency to show off during meetings because her behavior intimidated them.

Now, Ms. Christie continues, she often solicits associates' reaction following her presentations. Some reply, "You were a little off base." As a result, she tones down her strong delivery.

Intel's Ms. Hudnell finds male colleagues usually request her advice before they appear before the executive team for the first time. They want to know who will ask the toughest questions. Yet many Intel women only seek her counsel after a presentation "has not gone well," she says.

The insight inspired Ms. Hudnell to propose the presence workshop for emerging female stars. "You have to have executive presence in ways that will set you apart," she notes.
Wall Street Journal On-line Audience

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<td>Male / Female</td>
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<td>Market Value of Portfolio $500K +</td>
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Nielsen Online NetView, November 2010 – May 2011
## Tracking Students to Actual Instructor/Course

Spreadsheets were created to track students back to their original course/instructor. This information was used by Teaching Center to identify the Instructors of student who had not yet submitted their assignment. Instructors were given a list of their “non-compliant” students so they could take the opportunity to remind them during class to complete the assignment.

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