WRD 203: Business Writing

"Getting Down to Business: Alignment, Accessibility, and Active Engagement in an Online Business Writing Course"

What is WRD 203?

Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies 203: Business provides "instruction and experience in writing for business, industry, and government." The course emphasizes "clarity, conciseness, and effectiveness in preparing letters, memos, and reports for specific audiences." WRD 203 "[f]ulfills the Graduation Writing Requirement for some majors." Students must complete Composition & Communication I and II or Accelerated Composition & Communication before taking WRD 203. [From the official course description]

The Challenge

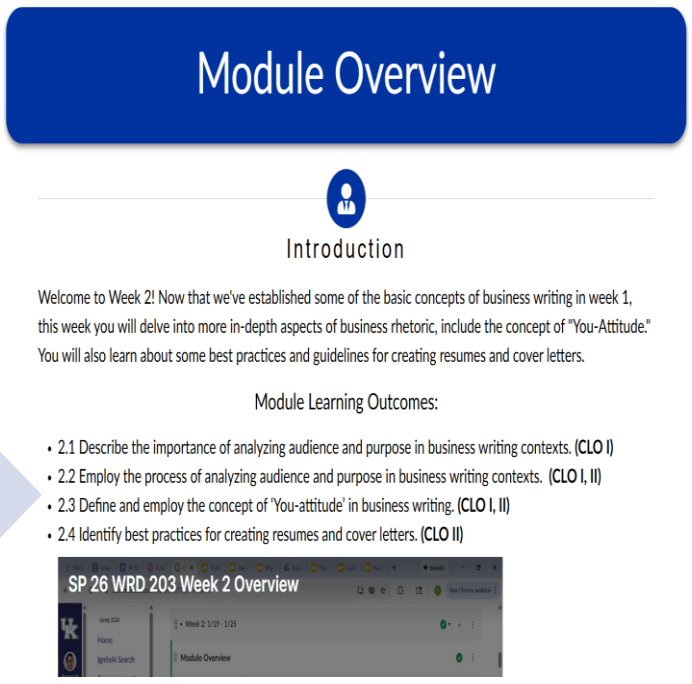
The asynchronous online modality of this course makes active student engagement with course materials a challenge. This modality also necessitates fully accessible materials and alignment of module-level objectives with course learning outcomes.

Module # and Title	Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)	Module Learning Outcomes (MLOs)
Module 2: Audience and Purpose in Business Writing	**I** **II**	**After successful completion of the module, the student will be able to:** 2.1 Describe the importance of analyzing audience and purpose in business writing contexts. **(CLO I)** 2.2 Employ the process of analyzing audience and purpose in business writing contexts. **(CLO I, II)** 2.3 Define and employ the concept of 'You-attitude' in business writing. **(CLO I, II)** 2.4 Identify the parts of a resume and cover letter **(CLO II)**

Assessments and Rubrics	Activities: Learner Interaction & Engagement	Instructional Materials
Misc. Assignment • Job Ads and Keywords Assignment • Homework Rubric • **MLOs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3**	**Misc. Assignment** • Job Ads and Keywords Assignment • Homework Rubric • **MLOs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3** **Interactive Lecture Videos** • You-Attitude, Audience, and Purpose in Business Writing **(MLO 2.1, 2.3)**	**Read** • Read "How to Properly Format a Business Email" • **MLO 2.4** • Chapter 15 of Technical Communication • **MLO 2.1** **Interactive Lecture Videos** • You-Attitude, Audience and Purpose in Business Writing **(MLO 2.1, 2.3)**

Clarified Alignment

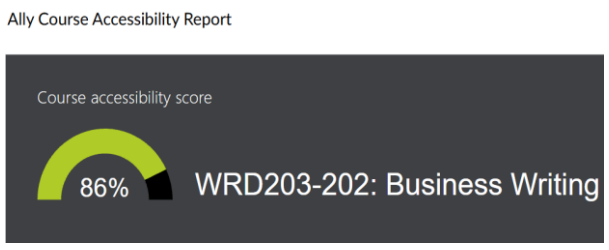
A Course Map provides a method for aligning assessments, activities, and materials with Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). Updated modules provide clear Module Learning Outcomes (MLOs) that align with CLOs.



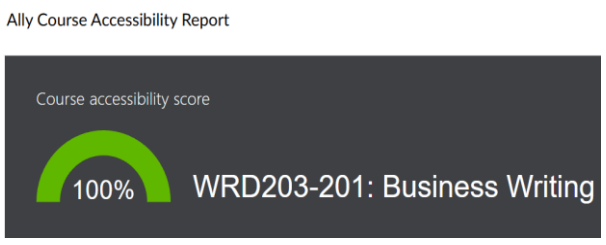
Improved Accessibility

The Ally Course Accessibility tool highlighted accessibility issues within my WRD 203 course shell. With the help of my instructional designer Shatha Hadad, I raised my course accessibility score from 86% to 100%.

Before



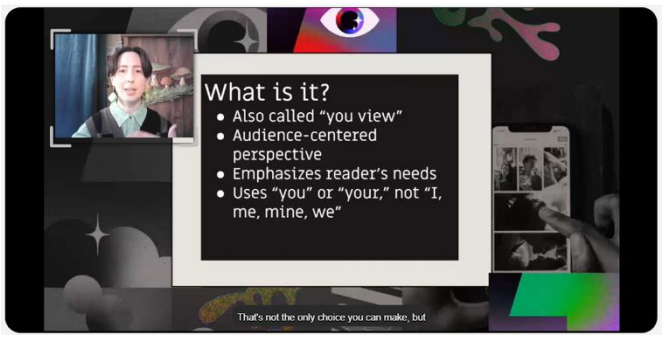
After



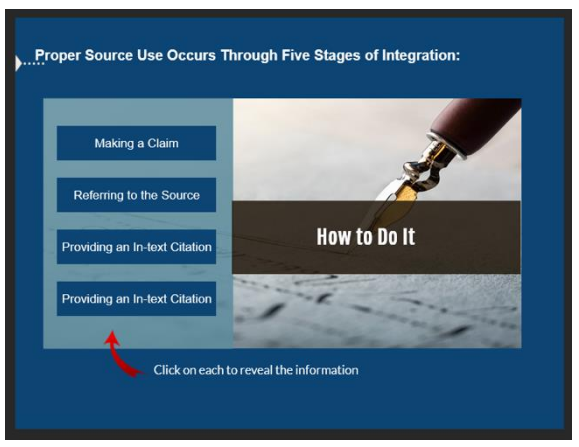
3 *Increased Engagement*

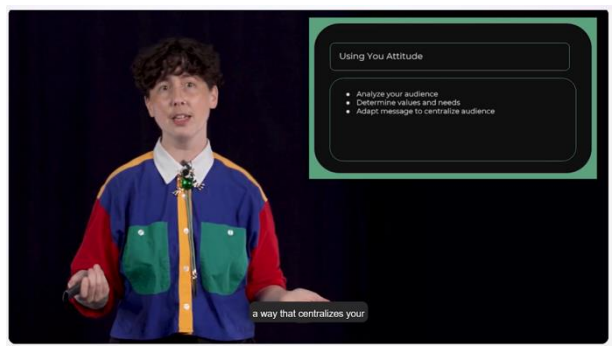
Shorter videos with check-ins and interactive videos created using Storyline replace longer, static lecture videos. With Yuja's in-video quiz feature, I can now identify which students watch the videos to completion so that I can intervene early to help students stay on track. Recording the videos at the Faculty Media Depot improved overall audio and video quality.

Before

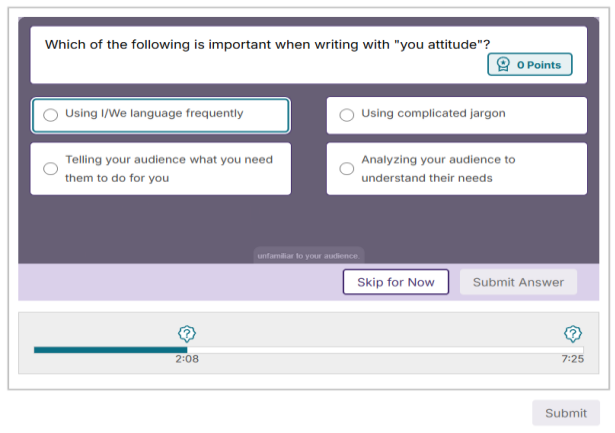


After





You Attitude Video



"Dr. Green, I just wanted to let you know I enjoy the videos you prepare for us very much. . . . The forms of media you provide are entertaining, informative, and overall, just great quality videos." – Student comment on course videos

Reflection and Acknowledgments

When beginning the Course Quality Design program, I felt proud of my online course overall. With many years of online teaching experience and a module-based course shell that I designed using CELT resources, students and faculty had appreciated the layout of my course. Nonetheless, I knew I could improve my course, particularly in areas of engagement and accessibility. The Course Quality Design program provided dedicated time, support, and accountability that allowed me to identify areas for improvement in my courses and take concrete steps toward improvement beyond the usual semester-to-semester adjustments. I have begun to implement what I learned through this program—particularly regarding outcome alignment, interactivity, and regular and substantive interaction (RSI) —to my other online courses. I already notice a difference in student engagement.

Thank you to my Instructional Designer, Shatha Hadad, as well as Kathryn Wong and the other members of the UK Online team for supporting me as I revised my course. Thank you as well to my fellow team member, Dr. Aubrey Bock, and to Dr. Jim Ridolfo for sponsoring my participation in this program. Thank you as well to Alex Corbett and the Faculty Media Depot for working with me to improve my course videos.

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2026 Faculty Fellow Course Quality Design Program

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