

Chair Bryant, Vice Chair Rives and Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the special notation required of ABL courses.

My name is Dr. Cornelia Paraskevas and I am WOU Writing Faculty and I lead the WP Writing Professional Learning Community. We offer two courses (WR 121 and 122) that allow HS students to earn college credit while in HS.

As in AP and IB courses, WP students demonstrate proficiency by completing specific tasks. Work is submitted as a portfolio, similar to how we assess in first-year writing at WOU. Because this approach was a new concept, we requested an external review by Dr. Dean of BYU (complete letter attached) who commented: "I am impressed with the WP program design and materials. In its general design, it aligns with standards from multiple constituencies while it also incorporates effective theory and current research in writing instruction..."

Some institutions have not accepted the WP ABL writing credits as satisfying degree requirements. This is puzzling: similar to all First Year writing courses offered at Oregon public colleges and universities, our course outcomes are aligned not only with our state writing standards (adopted by OWEAC in 2014-- documents labeled "Course Outline" and "Summative Rubric," respectively) but also with national writing standards (WPA Outcomes).

Perhaps the transferability problem relates to a perceived lack of rigor in our ABL courses: such concern, however, is not valid. As mentioned earlier, our courses meet the same outcomes as any public university in OR—only they do so following a different pathway, a pathway that allows for non-traditional and first generation students to have an equitable chance at being successful. In terms of quality, we ensure it by double-scoring close to 30% of portfolios, an external validation that is not typical of other accelerated credit models. (All teachers cross-score portfolios and then WOU faculty read 20% of every teacher's portfolios—the 20% is typical percentage for valid assessment).

In addition, we ensure quality by requiring that all WP teachers attend 4 meetings of our Professional Learning Community. Because an MA in literature does not ensure a teacher will be an effective writing instructor, we have required that teachers 'adopt' the WP writing framework which is based on the best practices in our field. This framework is laid out in this 200-page binder and summarized here (document labeled "Process / Sequence Overview." Mr. Hunter from Sheridan High School comments "my experience reveals the WP system somehow to be simultaneously more rigorous, more supportive and more flexible" than other programs he has been involved in.

I would welcome a state research initiative to track the progress and success of all students who bring WP's WR ABL credit to universities. However, until we all treat such courses equally, such research cannot be undertaken.

Treating these writing courses as fundamentally different from other FY writing courses—though they meet the same outcomes—penalizes students and results in lost credits. This ultimately is a financial issue: as we recently saw in the discussion of SB 207 (AP credit) each college credit averages \$323.10 per credit hour. But this is also an equity issue: WP serves students in many small districts where no AP/Honors/College Credit Now classes exist. Shouldn't these students have the same college opportunities that their more affluent peers have? Shouldn't they have the opportunity to see college in their future?

<p>Systematically and skillfully apply citation conventions.</p>		
<p>Outcome #5: Metacognition and Transfer WR 121: Reflect and document procedural knowledge gained in the areas of writing strategies. Discuss how to transfer and apply writing knowledge to new contexts.</p> <p>WR 122: Reflect and document procedural knowledge gained in the areas of writing strategies. Transfer and apply writing knowledge to new contexts.</p>		

SUMMATIVE RUBRIC

Strong 3=high pass	Effective 2=satisfactory pass	Adequate 1=low pass	Weak 0=no pass
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[OWEAC] Critical Reading [Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing]

<p>Ability to critically process information from reading to generate ideas for writing, noting gaps in existing discussion and adding insights to current conversation.</p>	<p>Ability to critically process information from reading to generate ideas for writing, noting gaps in existing discussion and adding surface-level insights to current conversation.</p>	<p>Some ability to critically process information from reading to generate ideas for writing but missing significant gaps in the current discussion.</p>	<p>Summary rather than analytical/evaluative reading</p>
Issue & Purpose [Rhetorical awareness]			
<p>Clearly demonstrated exigence (current pressing problem in the world).</p> <p>Connects to current "conversation" and explains context for reader.</p>	<p>Implied exigence</p> <p>Connects partially to current "conversation" and / or partially explains context for reader.</p>	<p>Exigence weakly related to the topic</p> <p>Mostly unconnected to "conversation" and / or fails to explain context for reader; or simply "presents" information without connecting to issue and purpose.</p>	<p>No clear exigence</p> <p>Unconnected to "conversation" and / or fails to explain context for reader; may simply "present" information without connecting to issue and purpose.</p>

Abilities

Why? (Motivated)

Why now? (Connected)

Thesis [Rhetorical awareness]

<p>Asserts an arguable claim that is specific, complex and reasonable; clear 'so what.'</p>	<p>Asserts an arguable and reasonable claim, but may lack specificity and / or complexity; clear 'so what.'</p>	<p>Claim may be mostly informational rather than argumentative. Unclear/unconvincing 'so what.'</p>	<p>Asserts the obvious or claim is simply only informational. Lacks "so what."</p>
Strong	Effective	Adequate	Weak

Specific & Defensible

Text Organization and Development [Rhetorical awareness]

<p>Chooses relevant evidence for purpose, stance, and audience and interprets source for reader. Integrates evidence and ideas smoothly.</p>	<p>Chooses relevant evidence for purpose, stance, and audience, but may not consistently interpret or explain source. Links evidence and ideas.</p>	<p>May rely more on observation or example than paraphrase or quotation; may use general, vague, or unreflective inference or opinion; tends to state rather than interpret or explain source. Links evidence and ideas partially or inconsistently.</p>	<p>Offers general support that is unreflective, mainly personal, or vague. Does not consistently or rarely connects evidence to ideas.</p>
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Support & Use of Evidence

Process / "Sequence" Overview

Task	Mentor Resources	Pedagogical Support	Reflection—after completing each task
<p>Beginning survey</p> <p>Student reads background readings and viewpoint articles</p>	<p>Strategies for reading rhetorically—annotated texts:</p> <p>Bruni, "College Rankings"</p> <p>Whitlans, "How to Get the Wealthy to Donate"</p>	<p>Mining texts</p> <p>Pre-teaching Reading</p> <p>Annotating a text</p> <p>Reading rhetorically</p>	<p>How is this rhetorical reading different from the way I read in the past?</p>
<p>Student writes on demand piece</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>When I finished the reading, I thought....about the issue</p> <p>As I wrote my on-demand piece, my focus was....</p> <p>My main purpose was....</p> <p>It was easy/difficult to write the on-demand piece because....</p>
<p>Student identifies 3 key issues in on-demand piece that are worth exploring</p>	<p>Mentor text—issues addressed</p> <p>Ballenger/Finding the focusing question</p>	<p>From on-demand to focusing</p>	<p>What questions in my on-demand piece are worth exploring further?</p> <p>Why do I think so?</p> <p>Why is it a currently important issue?</p> <p>Is there controversy associated with the issue?</p> <p>"Summing up":</p> <p>I am studying ... because I want to find out what/why/ whether/how</p> <p>in order to help my reader understand</p> <p>...</p>

WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (v3.0) (adopted 17 July 2014)

Introduction

This Statement identifies outcomes for first-year composition programs in U.S. postsecondary education. It describes the writing knowledge, practices, and attitudes that undergraduate students develop in first-year composition, which at most schools is a required general education course or sequence of courses. This Statement therefore attempts to both represent and regularize writing programs' priorities for first-year composition, which often takes the form of one or more required general education courses. To this end it is not merely a compilation or summary of what currently takes place. Rather, this Statement articulates what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory.¹ It intentionally defines only "outcomes," or types of results, and not "standards," or precise levels of achievement. The setting of standards to measure students' achievement of these Outcomes has deliberately been left to local writing programs and their institutions.

In this Statement "composing" refers broadly to complex writing processes that are increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies. Writers also attend to elements of design, incorporating images and graphical elements into texts intended for screens as well as printed pages. Writers' composing activities have always been shaped by the technologies available to them, and digital technologies are changing writers' relationships to their texts and audiences in evolving ways.

These outcomes are supported by a large body of research demonstrating that the process of learning to write in any medium is complex: it is both individual and social and demands continued practice and informed guidance. Programmatic decisions about helping students demonstrate these outcomes should be informed by an understanding of this research.

As students move beyond first-year composition, their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, their abilities will diversify along disciplinary, professional, and civic lines as these writers move into new settings where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge. Therefore, this document advises faculty in all disciplines about how to help students build on what they learn in introductory writing courses.

Rhetorical Knowledge

Rhetorical knowledge is the ability to analyze contexts and audiences and then to act on that analysis in comprehending and creating texts. Rhetorical knowledge is the basis of composing. Writers develop rhetorical knowledge by negotiating purpose, audience, context, and conventions as they compose a variety of texts for different situations. -

By the end of first-year composition, students should

- Learn and use key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes
- Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure
- Understand and use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

¹ This Statement is aligned with the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, an articulation of the skills and habits of mind essential for success in college, and is intended to help establish a continuum of valued practice from high school through to the college major.