

Contextualizing Document for Updated OWEAC Outcomes--2016

The following Oregon Writing and English Advisory Committee (OWEAC) Outcomes Statement represents the collaborative endeavor of writing faculty at two- and four-year institutions across the state. The statement describes the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors/attitudes that a student should demonstrate in and across the general education writing sequence that satisfies Oregon's Associated Arts of Transfer Degree and, at the community college level, fulfills degree, program, and certificate requirements.

The outcomes are based on two key documents created by the Writing Program Administrators: [*The WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition*](#) (2014) and [*The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*](#) (2010); they also reflect the discussion of information literacy that is articulated in the Association of College and Research Libraries' [*Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*](#) (2016). We urge parties who use the OWEAC outcomes to also consult these other texts.

Unlike our source documents, which describe the knowledge, skills, behaviors/attitudes, and abilities that students will demonstrate at the *end* of a first-year writing sequence, of necessity, our document parses these outcomes into separate courses: WR 115, WR 121, and WR 222. We call out approximate stages of development that students will traverse as they recursively engage with process writing across the general education writing sequence.

As such, the OWEAC “outcomes” are sometimes written in process, rather than product language, reflecting what research in the teaching of writing tells us: student performance on written tasks (and improvement on given tasks), is messy, as is assessment of these processes, and dependent on multiple opportunities to compose, rethink, and revise, responding to and giving feedback.

The WPA Outcomes Statement describes the messiness in this way:

It [*The WPA Outcomes Statement*] 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.

Thus, our documents do not supply thresholds for performance (what the WPA calls “standards”) the way that outcome language does in other fields; rather, the outcomes describe the skills and behaviors that the student will practice and develop. We leave it to individual college campuses to determine, based on a variety of contextualizing factors (text difficulty, assignment challenge and design, ratio of FT/PT faculty, supplemental instruction and other available support, such as a writing center) what level of writing proficiency students are expected to demonstrate. We assume that such a determination will be part of on-going assessment practices on a given college campus and, **necessarily**, include high school faculty involved in any dual credit programs sponsored by that institution.

Per the recommendations from the WPA on assessment, we argue that assessment work should examine a variety of student documents (perhaps a portfolio), attend to local culture and constraints, and involve local stakeholders in the process.

And, per the *Framework for Success*, we presume that faculty in other disciplines provide students with opportunities to compose in multiple contexts, for varied audiences, across genres and modalities. Oregon's first-year writing sequence, while pivotal for the development of students' composing, critical thinking, and deep reading practices, is not sufficient for the development of college students into competent writers and thinkers. The writing journey begun in first-year composition classes must, necessarily, continue in subsequent terms in disciplines outside of composition.

Course Descriptions/Parameters (to accompany the course outcomes)

WR 115, Introduction to College Composition, introduces students to the expectations of college-level reading, thinking, and writing. Students will be introduced to rhetorical concepts and engage in a collaborative writing process to produce projects for a variety of purposes and audiences, across more than one genre. Reading, writing, and critical thinking activities will focus on inquiry and the development of the metacognitive awareness of individuals *as writers*. Students will produce one formal essay of 700-800 words and a total of 2000-2500 words of revised, final draft copy over the term that incorporate source material and practice MLA citing and attribution conventions. Courses may include multimodal projects.

WR121, Academic Composition, focuses on rhetorical reading, thinking, and writing as means of inquiry. Students will gain fluency with key rhetorical concepts and utilize these in a flexible and collaborative writing process, reflecting on their writing process with the goal of developing metacognitive awareness. They will employ conventions, including formal citations, appropriate for a given writing task, attending to the constraints of audience, purpose, genre, and discourse community. Students will compose in two or more genres. They will produce 3000-3500 words of revised, final draft copy or an appropriate multimodal analog for this amount of text. If the focus is primarily multimodal, students will produce at least one essay that integrates research and demonstrates an understanding of the role of an assertive thesis in an academic essay of at least 1000 words.

WR 122, Argument, Research, and Multimodal Composition, continues the focus of WR 121 in its review of rhetorical concepts and vocabulary, in the development of reading, thinking, and writing skills, along with metacognitive competencies understood through the lens of a rhetorical vocabulary. Specifically, students will identify, evaluate, and construct chains of reasoning, a process that includes an ability to distinguish assertion from evidence, recognize and evaluate assumptions, and select sources appropriate for a rhetorical task. Students will employ a flexible, collaborative, and appropriate composing process, working in multiple genres, and utilizing at least two modalities. They will produce 3500-4500 words of revised, final draft copy or an appropriate multimodal analog for this amount of text. If the focus is primarily multimodal, students will produce at least one essay of a minimum of 1500 words, demonstrating competence in both research and academic argumentation.