WPA Statement on the Five Knowledge Domains of First-Year Composition (v4)

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Domain Supporting Documents

Domain 1: Rhetorical Knowledge

Rhetorical knowledge represents the meta-framework the field of writing studies uses to categorize concepts and theoretical frameworks for analyzing and understanding a composing situation. Critical rhetorical knowledge includes understanding that power dynamics and ethical implications shape reading, composing, and distribution choices and processes. As a pedagogical goal, rhetorical knowledge can be taught and assessed through two major activities: analyzing texts and producing texts, along with reflective analytical components that demonstrate rhetorical awareness and strategy. “Texts” include digital, visual, and multimodal formats. The Rhetorical Knowledge domain applies across all other domains; students should constantly be prompted to revisit their rhetorical analysis and choices during all analysis and composition processes. (Read overlapping Domain 3: Critical Reading and Thinking and Domain 5: Composing Processes.)

Keywords/Concepts

Many of the keywords/concepts of this domain have long intellectual histories of how they are defined, described, and implemented.

Academic English
Audience (direct, indirect, tertiary)
Author
Circulation
Context
Cultural knowledges
Englishes
Ethos
Genre
Language repertoires
Lived experiences
Logos
Medium

Modality
Pathos
Purpose
Rhetorical ecology
Rhetorical situation
Topic
Transfer

Domain Specific Considerations

- Some high school graduates have been exposed to the three rhetorical appeals of ethos, logos, and pathos, and may latch on to these as a monolithic catch-all. Consider expanding on this basis by presenting ways of identifying, knowing, and discussing language and rhetoric in more complex ways.
- This exposure to the three rhetorical appeals also places rhetoric in an ”Ancient” and “Greek” tradition. Consider exposing students to how rhetoric works in contemporary ways, such as in current events and pop culture, as well as non-Western rhetorics and ways of meaning-making.

SLO Scaffolding

WPAs should be aware of the importance of scaffolding SLOs throughout a writing program. Consider the following example for a full composition arch from integrated reading and writing/developmental education to sophomore/research composition.

Rhetorical Knowledge: Analyze rhetorical situations and adapt to the audience, purpose, modalities, and the circumstances surrounding a range of reading and writing tasks.

- **Sophomore Writing Outcome:** Complete a wide variety of academic tasks in multiple genres; locate, analyze, and cite reliable academic, peer-reviewed sources; recognize and critically assess the sociocultural histories of identity markers such as race, class, gender, ability, sexuality, and language backgrounds.
- **First-Year Writing Outcome**: Adapt reading and writing strategies based on the context, audience, purpose, and modalities for different academic tasks.
- **Integrated Reading and Writing II Outcome**: Use reading and writing strategies that reflect the context and purpose of an academic task.
- **Integrated Reading and Writing I Outcome**: Use reading and writing strategies that reflect the stated instructions for an academic task.

SLO Examples

Students shall be able to:

- Identify key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of written texts.

- 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.
- Implement culturally-specific discourses, argumentative tactics, and languages (including one's first language and any additional languages) when negotiating an academic debate, pressing social issue, or relevant cultural phenomenon.
- Create methods of academic and non-academic argumentation that are responsive to and critically assess the sociocultural histories of identity markers such as race, class, gender, ability, sexuality, and language background.

For Further Reading

There is no way to include all of the possible references for the conversation around rhetorical knowledge. Therefore, this section provides some texts that can guide how individual programs begin and explore concepts of rhetorical knowledge for designing student learning outcomes.

Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1968, p. 1–14.

Bizzell, Patricia. "Cognition, Convention, and Certainty: What We Need to Know About Writing." *PRE/TEXT*, vol. 3, 1982 pp. 213–243.

Burke, Kenneth. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. University of California Press, 1969.

Edbauer, Jenny. "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2005, pp. 5–24.

Ede, Lisa, and Andrea Lunsford. "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1984, p. 155–272.

Garret, Mary, and Xiaoxui Xiao. "The Rhetorical Situation Revisited." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Spring 1993, pp. 30–40.

Mao, LuMing. "Thinking beyond Aristotle: The Turn to How in Comparative Rhetoric." *PMLA*, vol. 129, no. 3, 2014, pp. 448–455.

Ridolfo, Jim, and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss. "Remixing and Reconsidering Rhetorical Velocity." *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, vol. 7, no. 2/3, 2017, pp. 59–67.

Domain 2: Conventions and Language

The range of linguistic histories and writing practices students bring to the writing classroom may align or clash with expected knowledge of conventions and language in academia. Often these tensions result in writing programs discounting students' linguistic knowledge as ill-suited for formal writing, or as less valuable for their creative expression of content knowledge as Standard English. Holding one dialect over another promotes dominance of one group over others. While indeed students must develop knowledge of Standard English in different contexts, Standard English alone is not the pinnacle of human language. Writing program administrators should take an expansive view of learning to write, focusing not only on academic writing but exploring the possibilities of linguistic expression across multiple genres and technologies. In learning the range of possible ways to use language, students should also come to understand the power dynamics around language that also shape conventions and language and the implications those power dynamics have on their personal, professional, and public lives.

In writing studies and pedagogy, conventions are formal rules and informal practices that define genres. They arise from a history of use, formalized and institutionalized by language rule-making groups in power, and facilitate reading by setting common expectations between writers and readers. They have also historically changed over time to meet changing cultural, economic, and political needs. Writers should learn about power dynamics around language that may shape how they navigate expectations around conventions, genres, and language choices. Such attention should acknowledge that any conventional and/or genre expectations are not universal.

To this end, note that conventions are the formal rules and informal guidelines that define genres, and in so doing, shape readers' and writers' perceptions of correctness or appropriateness. Conventions govern such things as mechanics, usage, spelling, and citation practices. But they also influence content, style, organization, graphics, and document design. Conventions arise from a history of use and facilitate reading by invoking common expectations between writers and readers. These expectations are not universal; they vary by genre (conventions for lab notebooks and discussion-board exchanges differ), by discipline (conventional moves in literature reviews in Engineering differ from those in Psychology), and by occasion (meeting minutes and executive summaries use different registers). A writer's grasp of conventions in one context does not mean a firm grasp in another. Successful writers understand, analyze, and negotiate conventions for purpose, audience, and genre, understanding that genres evolve in response to changes in material conditions and composing technologies and attending carefully to emergent conventions.

Keywords/Concepts

Many of the keywords/concepts of this domain have long intellectual histories of how they are defined, described, and implemented.

Anti-Black linguistic racism

Convention
Genre
Grammar/Mechanics
Linguistic diversity
Linguistic justice
Multilingualism
Normative English(es)
Raciolingusticis
Standard English(es)
Translingualism
Writing across the Curriculum (WAC)
Writing in the Disciplines (WID)

Domain Specific Considerations

- Specific institutional policies and/or state legislation may encourage or inhibit certain ideas or language/phrases around multilingualism, translingualism, and linguistic justice. Consider what your program can and can't do with these limitations.
- Students may speak and write in more than one language. Their first language may or may not have been Standard English. Their primary language now may not be their first language. They may speak and write different languages in different spaces from home, school, work, and other socializing spaces.
- Students may have different commands of speaking vs. writing in the same language. That is, someone who speaks normative Chinese well may not write it with the same command, or vice-versa. And someone who writes academic English well may only command speaking English casually. A seeming dissonance between speaking and writing is not indicative of plagiarism or foul play.
- Many students are exceptional writers in another language and translate their writing using software into English. Note that such devices can promote students' learning English. Programs, and even individual instructors, may need to be explicit about their level of acceptance of this practice, according to the learning outcomes of first-year composition courses.
- Different disciplines/fields may have different levels of adherence to normative or standard English(es) and thus non-normative or non-standard English(es) or other language.
- Different disciplines/fields may hold different values of concise and precise language vs. exposition.
- Through K-12 schooling, students may have internalized a specific kind of English or other language to be of "higher value" both in and out of academic spaces.
- Some students now graduate high school and enter college without the experience of having assigned longer, sustained writing such as the academic essay or research paper. Consider what students need to succeed in these genres if they are required and/or what other writing genres may be taught in the writing classroom today.

SLO Scaffolding

WPAs should be aware of the importance of scaffolding student outcomes throughout a writing program. Consider the following example for a full composition arch from integrated reading and writing/developmental education to sophomore/research composition.

Conventions and Language: Demonstrate critical and conceptual awareness of genre, language, and academic conventions in reading and writing—including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.

- **Sophomore Writing Outcome:** Evaluate linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, acknowledging the stylistic variations of grammar usage and the underlying belief systems supporting their enforcement to choose how to complete a writing task.
- **First-Year Writing Outcome**: Adapt common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts; recognize why genre conventions for structure, grammatical style, paragraphing, tone, and mechanics vary.
- **Integrated Reading and Writing II Outcome:** Adapt writing strategies, styles, and mechanics to different types of writing assignments and activities.
- **Integrated Reading and Writing I Outcome:** Recognize that different types of texts require different writing strategies.

SLO Examples

Students shall be able to:

- Understand why genre conventions for structure, grammatical style, paragraphing, tone, and mechanics vary.
- Negotiate expectations by understanding the historical, cultural and social constructions of how languages and conventions are valued.
- Negotiate variations in genre conventions.
- Describe and use common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts.
- Develop strategies and practices for understanding linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising, and acknowledging the stylistic variations of grammar usage and the underlying belief systems supporting their enforcement.

For Further Reading

There is no way to include all of the possible references for the conversation around Conventions and Language. Therefore, this section provides some texts that can guide how individual programs begin and explore concepts of conventions and language for designing student learning outcomes.

Baker-Bell, April. *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy.* Routledge, 2020.

Bushman, Donald, and Elizabeth Ervin. “Rhetorical Contexts of Grammar: Some Views From Writing-Emphasis Course Instructors.” *The Place of Grammar in Writing Instruction: Past, Present, Future,* edited by Susan Hunter and Ray Wallace, Boynton/Cook, 1995, pp. 136–158.

CCCC Special Committee on Composing a CCCC Statement on Anti-Black Racism and Black Linguistic Justice, Or, Why We Cain’t Breathe! “This Ain’t Another Statement! This Is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!” Conference on College Composition and Communication, 2020. https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/demand-for-black-linguistic-justice.

Committee on CCCC Language Statement. “Students’ Right to Their Own Language.” *College English*, vol. 36, no. 6, 1975, pp. 709–26. https://doi.org/10.2307/374965.

Conference on College Composition and Communication. “CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Multilingual Writers.” CCCC, https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/secondlangwriting.

Gere, Anne Ruggles, et al. “Communal Justicing: Writing Assessment, Disciplinary Infrastructure, and the Case for Critical Language Awareness.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 72, no. 3, pp. 384–412.

Hankerson, Shenika. “The World Has to Stop Discriminating Against African American Language” (AAL): Exploring the Language Ideologies of AAL-Speaking Students in College Writing.” *Written Communication*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2023, pp. 587–619.

Inoue, Asao B. “How Do We Language So People Stop Killing Each Other, or What Do We Do about White Language Supremacy?” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 71, no. 2, 2019, pp. 352–369.

Young, Vershawn Ashanti. “Should Writers Use They Own English?” *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no.1, 2010, pp. 110–118.

Domain 3: Critical Reading and Thinking

When writers think critically about the materials they use—whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials—they separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and generalizations for the contexts, purposes, genres, and audiences they are communicating in and with.

For students critical reading may mean reading for problem-solving and communicating in various rhetorical contexts. Students locate and evaluate sources for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias, and so on. Sources include primary and secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, informal electronic networks, and internet sources. Students use strategies—such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign—to compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources.

Critical reading and thinking both develop and draw on students' information literacy skills. Writing program administrators can define and conceptualize information literacy using the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education by Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). The ACRL considers information literacy a sociocultural practice that involves six concepts listed below.

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

Critical thinking and metacognition are often made visible through reflection. As Kara Taczak writes in *Naming What We Know*, "Reflection is a mode of inquiry: a deliberate way of systematically recalling writing experiences to reframe the current writing situation. It allows writers to recognize what they are doing in that particular moment (cognition), as well as to consider why they made the rhetorical choices they did (metacognition). The combination of cognition and metacognition, accessed through reflection, helps writers begin assessing themselves as writers, recognizing and building on their prior knowledge about writing" (78).

Keywords/Concepts

Many of the keywords/concepts of this domain have long intellectual histories of how they are defined, described, and implemented.

Cognition
Critical Reading

Critical Thinking
Deep reading
Disinformation vs Misinformation
Fake news
Information literacy
Metacognition
Reflection vs. Reflexivity
Source reliability

Domain Specific Considerations

- Finding, consuming, and using texts are all acts of thinking; instructors should help develop students' awareness of the relationship between critical thinking and literacy.
- Students need direct instruction in reading strategies for a variety of texts, scholarly and digital.
- Students should understand that they always read for a specific goal or purpose, such as synthesizing ideas, reflecting on the text's meaning in their life, summarizing, or incorporating a text into their own thinking and/or writing.
- Different purposes for reading require different reading strategies.
- Encourage students to have meta conversations on why some texts are hard to read or comprehend.
- Reflecting on the writing process helps students understand their own writing process and workflow.

SLO Scaffolding

WPAs should be aware of the importance of scaffolding student outcomes throughout a writing program. Consider the following example for a full composition arch from integrated reading and writing/developmental education to sophomore/research composition.

Critical Reading: Demonstrate critical and conceptual awareness of genre, language, and academic conventions in reading—including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.

- **Sophomore Writing Outcome:** Analyze rhetorical situations and adapt reading strategies that support composing for audience, purpose, modalities, and the circumstances surrounding a range of academic tasks.
- **First-Year Writing Outcome**: Adapt reading strategies based on the context, audience, purpose, and modalities for different academic tasks.
- **Integrated Reading and Writing II Outcome**: Use reading strategies that reflect the context and purpose of an academic task.
- **Integrated Reading and Writing I Outcome**: Use reading strategies that reflect the stated instructions for an academic task.

SLO Examples

Students shall be able to:

- Distinguish main ideas and supporting points.
- Evaluate the persuasiveness of assumptions, arguments and evidence.
- Create relevant inferences, including inferences about authorial motivation and biases.
- Evaluate primary and secondary sources according to academic conventions.
- Incorporate primary and secondary sources according to academic conventions.
- Identify appropriate citation style according to rhetorical context and/or discipline.

For Further Reading

There is no way to include all of the possible references for the conversation around rhetorical knowledge. Therefore, this section provides some texts that can guide how individual programs begin and explore concepts of rhetorical knowledge for designing student learning outcomes.

Carillo, Ellen C. *Securing a Place for Reading in Composition: The Importance of Teaching for Transfer*. University Press of Colorado, 2015.

Carillo, Ellen C. *Teaching Readers in Post-Truth America*. University Press of Colorado, 2018.

Carillo, Ellen C. *A Writer's Guide to Mindful Reading*. University Press of Colorado, 2017.

Hodgson, Justin, et al. “Social Annotation: Promising Technologies and Practices in Writing.” *Digital Writing Technologies in Higher Education*, edited by Otto Kruse, Christian Rapp, Chris M. Anson, Kalliopi Benetos, Elena Cotos, Ann Devitt, and Antonette Shibani. Springer, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-36033-6_9.

Horning, Alice S. “Reading Across the Curriculum as the Key to Student Success.” *Across the Disciplines*, vol. 1, 2007. https://wacclearinghouse.org/docs/atd/articles/horning2007.pdf.

Maloy, Jennifer, et al. “The Un-Common Read: Perspectives from Faculty and Administration at a Diverse Urban Community College.” *What Is College Reading?*, edited by Alice S. Horning, Deborah-Lee Gollnitz, and Cynthia R. Haller, WAC Clearinghouse, 2017, pp. 67–88.

VanderStaay, Steven, et al. “The Role of Reading Instruction in Teaching for Social Justice.” *Teaching English in the Two Year College*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2024, pp. 309–329.

VanKooten, Crystal. “Identifying Components of Meta-Awareness about Composition: Toward a Theory and Methodology for Writing Studies.” *Composition Forum*, vol. 33, 2016, n.p.

Domain 4: Material Conditions and Technologies

What is happening, or has happened, in other aspects of a student's life (both in terms of other academic responsibilities as well as areas external to school) impacts the energy, intellectual frameworks, and materialistic access students bring to literacy and learning. Although an instructor may not have the ability to know or help with students' material conditions external to the course, instructors can be aware of the potential impact, help students be self-aware of the potential impact, and prompt students to reflect upon and account for the impact on their reading, writing, and learning.

Literacy is mediated by analog and digital writing technologies. The options for composing are multimodal in nature, encompassing linguistic, auditory, spatial, gestural, and visual modalities of communication. Many digital platforms help students blend these modalities together to express their knowledge and share arguments with diverse audiences. Teachers should expose students to a variety of writing technologies that enable such composing. Learning how to use different writing technologies includes identifying their limitations and affordances according to the needs of the composer's rhetorical context. Exploration helps students develop their composing workflows, which are modular processes for completing a literate task using different tools available to the composer.

In addition, teachers should help students assess the conditions that impact their composing with writing technologies, such as considering their time to compose, their prior knowledge, their access to different writing technologies, their ability to learn such technologies, their options for potential collaborators, and their mental, emotional, and bodily relationship with composing. As students explore how they can develop and expand their creative and intellectual expressions through writing technologies, teachers should help students understand the social and material consequences those tools may have in key areas of the human experience, such as in personal data privacy, climate change, labor exploitation, and the tools' contributions to perpetuating social inequality. (Read overlapping Cross-Category Knowledge Domains, Generative Artificial Intelligence and Accessibility.)

Keywords/Concepts

Many of the keywords/concepts of this domain have long intellectual histories of how they are defined, described, and implemented.

Access
Algorithm
Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Coding (computer)
Critical access
Critical digital cultural literacy
Data privacy
Digital literacy

Functional access
Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI)
Material access
Multimodal composing
Multimodality
Remix
Rhetorical velocity
Social media
Transformative access
Writing workflow

Domain Specific Considerations

- Provide students with the space to acknowledge the impact of their greater personal context on their literacy and learning processes.
- Consider that many students are not “digital natives” or have had reliable access to broadband internet prior to college, especially students from rural counties in the United States.
- Consider what software licenses your institution has purchased, so students can use word processing applications and/or create digital projects at no cost to them.
- Consider free or low-cost alternatives to industry software, such as Adobe Creative Cloud. The popularity of professional composing platforms shifts often, so learning long-term competencies such as adaptability and flexibility, embodied in a learn-how-to-learn approach to teaching, matters more than learning any one platform.
- Consider that multimodal texts can be digital and physical (i.e. designing board games).
- Consider that multimodal texts may require a different approach to assessment than print-based essays. If your program primarily uses rubrics across all FYC sections, you may need a new rubric that responds to the learning goals of multimodal texts. Alternative forms of writing assessment, such as labor-based contract grades and portfolio-based assessment may already respond to multimodal texts well.

SLO Scaffolding

WPAs should be aware of the importance of scaffolding student outcomes throughout a writing program. Consider the following example for a full composition arch from integrated reading and writing/development education to sophomore/research composition.

Material Conditions and Technologies: Support and develop ideas in writing using hardware, software, online platforms, GenAI, and other tools (both digital and non-digital) to produce multimodal content.

- **Sophomore Writing Outcome:** Evaluate hardware, software, online platforms, GenAI, and other tools (both digital and non-digital) used to produce multimodal content.

- **First-Year Writing Outcome**: Adapt common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts using hardware, software, online platforms, GenAI, and other tools (both digital and non-digital) used to produce multimodal content.
- **Integrated Reading and Writing II Outcome:** Identify a variety of hardware, software, online platforms, GenAI, and other tools (both digital and non-digital) used to produce multimodal content.
- **Integrated Reading and Writing I Outcome:** Recognize that multimodal composition requires the use of different types hardware, software, online platforms, GenAI, and other tools (both digital and non-digital).

SLO Examples

Students shall be able to:

- Reflect on how students' past and current situations inform their reading practices and composing processes.
- Analyze the rhetorical affordances of multimodal texts.
- Identify how perceptions of self and others are mediated through multimodal composition technologies (digital or otherwise).
- Produce complex multimodal work that demonstrates awareness of audience, context, and stakes; engages specific genre conventions; incorporates appropriate evidence; and strategically combines selected modes.
- Demonstrate an increasing facility with hardware, software, online platforms, and other tools (both digital and non-digital) used to produce multimodal content.
- Apply GenAI tools to optimize content creation and distribution, focusing on real-world scenarios and audiences.
- Describe how GenAI technologies work, including how they are trained; how they rely on particular resources, labor, and economies; how they generate text and/or images; and how they are integrated into particular products and tools.

For Further Reading

There is no way to include all of the possible references for the conversation around material conditions and technologies. Therefore, this section provides some texts that can guide how individual programs begin and explore concepts of material conditions and technologies for designing student learning outcomes.

Alexander, Kara P., et al., editors. *Multimodal Composing and Writing Transfer*. Utah State University Press, 2024.

Banks, Adam J. *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground*. Routledge, 2006.

Haas, Christina. *Writing Technology: Studies on the Materiality of Literacy*. Routledge, 2006.

Jiang, Jialei. "Composing to Enact Affective Agency: Engaging Multimodal Antiracist Pedagogy

in the First-Year Writing Classroom." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 75, no. 3, 2024, pp. 534–557.

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Khadka, Santosh, and Shyam B. Pandey, editors. *Professionalizing Multimodal Composition*. Utah State University Press, 2023.

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Shipka, Jody. *Toward a Composition Made Whole*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.

Domain 5: Composing Processes

Composing processes are some of the most concrete, applicable, and transferable activities taught in first-year composition courses. As part of the processes taught, instructors should prompt students to start with analysis of their rhetorical situation to help inform students' composing choices. While individual composing processes are both taught/guided and unearthed/discovered, teaching composing process(es) not only includes activities to help produce a text, but also thinking frameworks to help analyze the rhetorical situation and required genre, conduct and synthesize primary and secondary research, and reflect upon composing choices and learning (e.g., rhetorical triangle, qualitative analysis). Although there are examples of core composing processes that almost every instructor covers (e.g., brainstorming list, drafting, peer review), both instructors and students use their own creativity as well as constraining aspects of a rhetorical situation to adapt well-known processes and develop new ones.

While earlier composing process(es) conversations and instruction distinguished between process-oriented approaches and product-oriented approaches to writing–a way to consider either a focus on **what** is being produced or **how** it is being produced–more recent conversations reveal such a dichotomous approach as oversimplified. In this section, much of what is explored takes into consideration that focusing on the textual creation and the specifics of produced/texts created are intricately connected.

Keywords/Concepts

Many of the keywords/concepts of this domain have long intellectual histories of how they are defined, described, and implemented.

Collaborative/Collaboration
Composing
Critical Reading/Research
Critical Thinking
Editing
Feedback
Inquiry
Invention
Reflection
Revision
Post-Process
Pre-Writing
Problem Solving
Transfer

Domain Specific Considerations

- Composing processes and thinking frameworks can and should be taught in relation to all other first-year composition knowledge domains and cross-category knowledge domains.
- Assessing composing processes and thinking frameworks can be problematic when treated in isolation; however, considerations of assessment should include the ways in which composers understand and enact aspects of composing thinking and frameworks.
- Conversations around multilingual writers and writing process(es) should be considered as part of larger conversations around the framework and practices of writing process(es).
- Sub-domains of Composing Processes might include:

    - Rhetorical analysis
    - Production processes
    - Production choices
    - Reflective analysis
    - Critical reflection
    - Considerations of GenAI in textual analysis and production

SLO Scaffolding

WPAs should be aware of the importance of scaffolding student outcomes throughout a writing program. Consider the following example for a full composition arch from integrated reading and writing/dev ed to sophomore/research composition.

Composing Processes: Develop flexible, iterative, and reflective processes for invention, drafting, workshopping, and revision.

- **Sophomore Writing Outcome:** Develop recursive composing processes to varied rhetorical situations for invention, drafting, and revision, based on meaningful collaborative feedback during the composing process.
- **First-Year Writing Outcome**: Integrate recursive composing processes to varied rhetorical situations for invention, drafting, and revision; reflect on collaborative feedback and instructor feedback during the composing process.
- **Integrated Reading and Writing II Outcome:** Identify recursive composing strategies, participate in collaborative feedback, revise based on feedback, and explain revision choices
- **Integrated Reading and Writing I Outcome:** Choose composing strategies, share and discuss writing with others, use instructor feedback to revise a text.

SLO Examples

Students shall be able to:

- Describe writing as a series of situated choices, decisions, skills, and behaviors that usually takes multiple attempts to create and complete successfully.
- Make decisions around appropriate use of material conditions and writing technologies.
- Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading.
- Explain the individual, collaborative, and social aspects of writing.
- Provide contextualized feedback for their own and others' writing.
- Create problem-solving processes in order to appropriately adapt contextualized features such as syntax, grammar, punctuation, style, tone, structure and spelling.
- Create and revise texts using responses from others, including peers, teachers, writing center tutors, and community members.

For Further Reading

There is no way to include all of the possible references for the conversation around composing processes. Therefore, this section provides some texts that can guide how individual programs begin and explore concepts of composing processes for designing student learning outcomes.

Baez, Elizabeth, and Rosanne Carlo. "Encouraging Student Voices: Toward a Voice-Based and Antiracist Culture from the MA Program to Basic Writing." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2021, p. 99-126.

Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1986, pp. 4–23.

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Flower, Linda, and John R. Hayes. "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 32, no. 4, 1981, pp. 365–387.

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Kane, Megan. "From Campus to Classroom: Rewriting the Writing Process: Multimodality as Meaningful Instruction." *The English Journal*, vol. 108, no. 2, 2018, pp. 101–104.

Lockridge, Tim, and Derek Van Ittersum. *Writing Workflows: Beyond Word Processing*. University of Michigan Press, 2020.

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Sommers, Nancy I. “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1980, pp. 378–388.

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Cross-Category Knowledge Domains

Accessibility and Disability

Important knowledge and practices for building accessibility in writing courses emerge from a framework called Universal Design for Learning (see Dolmage) that invites instructors and WPAs to consider how course materials, activities, and resources might be designed to reach broad audiences of students or be flexible/adaptable to different needs. Such moves can go a long way to supporting students' persistence and success in writing courses. However, it's also important to recognize that the access and accessibility practices of a particular course cannot be reduced to a checklist of recommended or required activities or practices given the diversity of instructors' pedagogical needs, course designs, classroom environments, instructor and student bodyminds, and more.

In terms of student learning and composing processes, students should learn about and reflect on the diverse ways they and other readers or audiences engage with conventional print-based and multimodal texts. While accessibility can include consideration of what language styles, conventions, and uses might support a reader's uptake of a text, it must also center the embodied needs of disabled composers and readers. Universal design is a useful way to introduce conversations about accessibility, but is not itself a solution for engaging with situated questions about textual and composing accessibility involving actual composers and readers. In composing for web and/or digital contexts, familiarity with WCAG 2.0 accessibility standards, especially in light of U.S. federal guidance mandating course accessibility standards.

WPAs may find it helpful to create or point instructors and students to resources that prioritize accessibility guidelines that they should learn to navigate, as well as to encourage instructors and students to take advantage of accessibility resources that are part of classroom and composing technologies. Here are two 2025 examples of such documents, one from the University of Washington Libraries and another from the University of Minnesota Office for Digital Accessibility.

Keywords/Concepts

Many of the keywords/concepts of this domain have long intellectual histories of how they are defined, described, and implemented.

Ableism
Access
Accessibility
Accommodation
Bodymind
Crip/Cripping
Disability/Disabling
Embodiment

Retrofit/Retrofitting
Universal Design for Learning

Cross-Domain Specific Considerations

Below we offer some questions that might support you in thinking about accessibility in relation to each of the five knowledge domains.

- How might attention to experiences of embodiment in the composing and reading process help build students' and instructors' familiarity and comfort around navigating accessibility in their work together? (see Cedillo; King).
- How do questions of access, accessibility, and disability get us thinking about students' ability to learn effectively and accomplish the tasks we set?
- What kind(s) of texts and modalities will students be engaging in this course? Can these texts be made available in flexible and/or multiple formats? How might moving across modalities support students' uptake of rhetorical knowledge? How and where might students have multiple pathways for navigating, accessing, and/or engaging course texts?
- What technologies are available for students' use in the classroom? How do these technologies invite, expect, or require particular forms of embodied engagement with them?

SLO Examples

Students shall be able to:

- Analyze the work of others to understand disability and accessibility broadly, including disability studies scholars and activists, scholars in writing studies, writers addressing disability from non-academic perspectives, and other students.
- Examine the practices and principles associated with universal (accessible) design.
- Judge a range of critical works that examine the role that the body plays in writing and communicative practices.

For Further Reading

There is no way to include all of the possible references for the conversation around accessibility and disability. Therefore, this section provides some texts that can guide how individual programs begin and explore concepts of accessibility and disability for designing student learning outcomes.

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Generative Artificial Intelligence

Generally, specific kinds of digital technologies are not elevated to a learning outcome or domain. However, this cross-category domain for generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is predicated upon the impact this technology is currently having on writing and writing instruction. The discipline's interventions in GenAI are ongoing and will determine the continuation of this domain in future iterations of the Outcomes Statement.

Generative artificial intelligence refers to a class of artificial intelligence systems that can create new content, such as text, images, audio, and video. Large language models (LLMs) are AI trained on a massive corpus of texts while large multimodal models (LMMs) have been trained on a massive corpus of multimedia. However, with the advances in GenAI design these two blend together, so that what was once an LLM – a technology only able to produce text – can now create multimedia. This supporting document is largely focused on LLMs – GenAI technologies that can produce text.

Users often encounter GenAI as a chatbot interface. Similar to chatting with a friend through text message, users can write queries to the chatbot – called prompts or inputs – and receive a response – called outputs. However, GenAI goes beyond a chatbot interface students can visit on an app or website. Students may use or encounter GenAI that has been integrated into existing legacy software, such as Google Docs, Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Word, as well as hardware like Apple and Android phones. Companies have developed agentic AI–GenAI that can autonomously complete tasks on a computer according to the standards set by the user.

Public discourse, especially from GenAI companies, claims these platforms have immense educational value. As such, many organizations and firms in private industry, nonprofits, and education have adopted these tools in one form or another. However, this integration is never smooth nor complete, so it's important that WPAs be wary of claims that GenAI will be a necessary skill for college students. The extent to which these tools support learning to write, especially given the ethical and moral tradeoffs of using cloud-based LLMs, deserves healthy skepticism as well. Thus, exploring GenAI's material impact on the environment, labor, creativity, human agency, and students' learning extends the discipline's legacy of studying how digital technologies mediate writing and how they activate existing social inequalities.

Keywords/Concepts

AI hype
Algorithm
Anthropic
Anthropomorphization
Artificial intelligence
Chain-of-thought prompting
Claude
Digital damage

Few-shot prompting
Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)
GenAI refusal
Gemini
Hallucination
Inevitably rhetoric
Image generator
Large language model (LLM)
Mirage
OpenAI
Prompting
Prompt engineering
Rhetorical offloading
Zero-shot prompting

Cross-Domain Specific Considerations

- Consider that students can learn about GenAI without using GenAI platforms, for example by analyzing sample outputs or conducting a research project on the moral and ethical challenges of designing GenAI.
- Consider that students learn to write by doing their own deliberate practice; frequently offloading writing to GenAI leads to cognitive debt – gradual weakening of mental effort and critical thinking skills that can occur when individuals rely excessively on external tools and technologies to perform cognitive tasks.
- Rather than use GenAI to complete common mundane tasks, ask students to create real authentic challenges that GenAI may supplement.
- Consider creating a broad learning outcome on digital literacy, giving instructors the option to teach about GenAI and writing in their classrooms.
- Consider that integrating GenAI into writing courses should follow curricular and course goals and institutional policies.

SLO Examples

Students shall be able to:

- Describe how GenAI technologies work, including how they are trained; how they rely on particular resources, labor, and economies; how they generate text and/or images; and how they are integrated into particular products and tools.
- Describe the ethical dilemmas raised by writing with AI, such as questions of authorship and intellectual property, privacy, bias, and epistemology.
- Evaluate the broad affordances and limitations of GenAI products for a range of audiences, contexts, and purposes, especially as they pertain to reading, writing, research, and learning situations, and negotiate their usefulness in light of documented ethical issues and harms.
- Compose texts in a variety of genres with assistance from generative artificial intelligence applications at various stages of the writing process.

- Synthesize viewpoints, quantitative data, and interpretations from experts and stakeholders to create effective and ethical GenAI-driven content strategies

For Further Reading

There is no way to include all of the possible references for the conversation around generative artificial intelligence and writing. Therefore, this section has been provided as a brief way of sharing texts that can guide how individual programs begin and explore concepts of Gen AI when addressing this aspect of the writing curriculum.

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Genre

Genre is the contentious space wherein convention and language are used and play out in specific contexts and for specific rhetorical purposes. Genre refers to a category of collected and established conventions. While genres do set the conventions of writing and language, genres are often misconceived as simply learning the dos and don'ts of a writing format and then filling in the gaps, like a Mad Libs game. This approach to genre reduces writing to a mechanical formula. In writing studies and pedagogy, genres influence and are influenced by social action, and cultural capital is often aligned with expectations, as well as who and what is considered “correct.” Writing genres also evolve over time to meet economic, social, and political needs. Expectations to meet genre conventions have multiple purposes, from standardized and efficient shared communications to tools of cultural and linguistic assimilation. To teach genres as fixed and “just the way it is” therefore would not reflect this fluid nature. Outcomes that look toward the future could anticipate how student writers may need to be encouraged to consider how genres may change.

A variety of academic writing genres (i.e., research article, literature review, research proposal) are in the category of genres writing students work with throughout their personal life and professional careers. Writing programs can help navigate students’ language choices in relation to different conventions, genres, writing technologies, author intentions, and audience expectations.

Keywords/Concepts

Many of the keywords/concepts of this domain have long intellectual histories of how they are defined, described, and implemented.

Genre
Subgenre
Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)
Writing in the Disciplines (WID)

Cross-Domain Specific Considerations

Genres have a mutually impactful relationship with conventions. That is, conventions may determine and change genres, and vice versa, as well as the linguistic, rhetorical, and stylistic choices that writers make. These are all negotiated throughout the composing process. Students, and some instructors, may hold a conception or definition of the idea of “genres” as used in popular culture. Consider what they may need to understand the idea of “writing genres.”

SLO Examples

Students shall be able to:

- Describe various writing genres beyond the academic essay and research paper.
- Identify common writing genres of everyday life and academic writing, including variability across different academic disciplines.
- Understand that conventions are not fixed and have historically fluctuated across different communities, spaces, and time periods.
- Demonstrate awareness and/or use of the choice to adhere to or challenge specific conventions for creative and rhetorical purposes.
- Shift the language and stylistic choices in their writing when moving from one context, genre, audience, or purpose to another.

For Further Reading

There is no way to include all of the possible references for the conversation around genre. Therefore, this section has been provided as a brief way of sharing texts that can guide how individual programs begin and explore concepts of genre.

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