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

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Executive Summary

For the practical purpose of sharing as reference with colleagues and administrators, the Five Knowledge Domains section should suffice. The rest of this document is then designed to serve those delving deeper into and taking part in creating or revising a program's or institution's student learning outcomes (SLOs).

Drawing on the most recent research, practice, and theories of composition pedagogy, this document identifies five domains that describe the most consequential areas of learning in first-year composition programs to help undergraduates develop their skill and competency in college, professional, and community-level writing: Rhetorical Knowledge, Conventions and Language, Critical Reading and Thinking, Material Conditions and Technologies, and Composing Processes. Further included are three cross-category domains–areas of composition that do not fit neatly in one domain but rather have the potential to influence two or more main knowledge domains: Accessibility and Disability, Generative Artificial Intelligence, and Genre. Each domain carries equal weight in importance and when taken together they represent a synergistic vision of first-year writing programs' desired long-term impact on student writers.

These domains have been developed from a North American context; however, this document may have potential applications internationally.

Writing is a complex lifelong sociocultural, material, and cognitive practice, ever evolving with the shifting tides of technology, culture, and politics. First-year composition programs teach students the critical literacies that help them adapt to new writing situations throughout their college and professional careers and in their local communities. First-year composition seeks to achieve a synergist vision of writing knowledge transfer–learning how writing knowledge and abilities learned in one context are repurposed and recontextualized within new writing contexts. This learning to adapt to a variety of contexts is the common link across disciplines. For this reason, all faculty across disciplines must be as invested in writing pedagogy as first-year composition programs.

Readers will find three ways to use this document:

1. Five Knowledge Domains of First-Year Composition lists each of the five knowledge domains and their broad definitions. Included are descriptions of three cross-category knowledge domains for WPAs to consider. This brief document can be used for quick reference, especially in conversations with graduate instructors, teaching faculty, faculty across disciplines, and university administrators.

2. Producing Contextually Situated Student Learning Outcomes provides a how-to guide for creating student learning outcomes and objectives that align with the Five Knowledge Domains of First-Year Composition and according to local institutional contexts. This guide helps new WPAs determine the objectives of first-year writing and helps seasoned WPAs discover ways they can revise their objectives and assignments.

3. Domain Supporting Documents provides a more extensive description of each domain and cross-domain, including keywords and concepts for further research, instructional consideration, an example to scaffold learning outcomes, examples of student learning outcomes, and list of scholarship for further reading. This section might appeal to WPAs and their committees looking for language and ways to justify their context-specific learning outcomes using shared scholarship from the discipline. In addition, they will find important considerations and sample student learning outcomes.

Previous iterations of the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition featured broad, universal learning outcomes. This Statement uses principles from organic assessment–assessment strategies designed based on a writing program's unique local circumstances. Similar to organic assessment, broad learning outcomes may be too simple and generic, and do not portray an institution's complex educational cultures and their contexts. While the five knowledge domains provided here represent a consensus in the discipline, the pathway toward those domains–and thus writing knowledge transfer–will be diverse and complex according to institutional type, faculty expertise and experience, labor conditions, student success resources, and student populations.

Sample learning outcomes are located in the Domain Supporting Documents section. However, they illustrate the genre conventions of learning outcomes, not definitive universal outcomes. We encourage WPAs to create "symbiotic, smart, organic, and locally grown" learning outcomes in their own right.

Language and Phrasing

Composition studies has been called on numerous occasions to work toward linguistic justice. However, an organic assessment approach acknowledges the fraught scope of this document, its ideas, and cultural, geographical, or national reach. While writing has been taught, administered, and formed as its own disciplinary field of study in specific ways in the United States and North America, we acknowledge that many Englishes have developed globally with their respective scholarship and knowledge traditions informing how writing is taught outside of the United States.

Due to local institutional and legislative variability, writing programs and course curricula may have varying degrees of capacity to address issues of language difference in learning outcomes. This iteration of the WPA Outcomes Statement acknowledges the need for such flexibility in curriculum design and provides agency for individual programs and instructors. That includes addressing issues of linguistic justice and translingualism; using banned or controversial words and phrases such as “linguistic diversity,” “linguistic justice,” “equality,” “inclusion,” and the systemic ideas of dominant, marginalized, or official languages; and the corresponding valuing of all dialects or variations of English and all other languages.

WPAs are strongly encouraged to create SLOs that address these terms and ideas within their programmatic and legal capacity to do so.

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Five Knowledge Domains of First-Year Composition

Brief History and Positionality

The Council of Writing Program Administrators' (CWPA) Outcomes Statements (v1, 2000; v2, 2008; v3, 2014) are a part of ongoing collaborative revisions by scholars with a wide variety of lived and professional experiences. We, the authors of this version, recognize our positions as administrators, researchers, and teachers include power and privilege that we cannot ignore, distance ourselves from, or disregard. We also acknowledge the challenges faced by past members, leaders, and stakeholders who have devoted their time, expertise, and passion to this work. In honoring the experiences of past committees, we commit to transparency, continuous improvement, and fostering a future that arcs toward justice.

Purpose and Goals

This statement identifies five common knowledge domains of first-year or introductory composition programs in higher education. Drawing on the most recent research, theories, and practices of composition pedagogy, these domains describe the most consequential areas of learning to help undergraduates develop their skill and competency in college, professional, and community-level writing. Each domain carries equal weight in importance and when taken together they represent a synergistic vision of first-year writing programs: to promote and facilitate writing knowledge transfer–understanding that writing knowledge and abilities learned in one context are reused within new writing contexts, both in immediate college coursework and beyond academia.

This document is designed to facilitate conversations and decision-making efforts among writing program administrators, university administrators, writing center directors, graduate instructors, teaching professors, faculty across disciplines, and any other relevant stakeholders. Many approaches to curriculum development can be complex and specific to institutional type, student population, labor conditions, faculty expertise and experience, university resources, community needs, and current laws and policies regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Therefore, users of this document will not find generic, broad learning outcomes for each knowledge domain. Instead it is theoretically aligned with organic assessment–a practical framework to develop assessments according to the unique conditions of the local level. WPAs are encouraged to develop learning outcomes that align with the five knowledge domains and match the unique contexts of their institution.

Domain 1: Rhetorical Knowledge

Students should analyze contexts, genres, and audiences as they develop purposes and goals for their writing and produce texts using the full range of their linguistic, cultural, and semiotic repertoires. The texts that students consume and produce, both in and out of academia, may be alphanumeric combined with multimodal formats, thus creating epistemic conditions that include various digital and visual rhetorics. Students need support to understand their composing processes as embodied and connected to the ways that different people navigate texts and contexts and to consider the ethical and material stakes of these processes.

Domain 2: Conventions and Language

Students understand that all people bring diverse linguistic histories and practices to various contexts, each offering valuable perspectives. No dialect or language is inherently superior; value is shaped by communities and power dynamics. Instruction that privileges Standard English risks reinforcing inequities and overlooking students' linguistic assets. Conventions and language are not universal—they evolve with cultural and disciplinary contexts. Students understand how conventions are constructed and negotiated, and why power circulates through language. Students are equipped to analyze, adapt, and advocate for their linguistic identities.

Domain 3: Critical Reading and Thinking

Students develop strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and analyze a text, including reading to understand what a text says, what a text does, and what a text means. Students need support to develop critical reading practices through standalone reading instruction and integrated reading and writing instruction. Students come to first-year composition with a wide range of reading practices. These reading practices emerge from their lived experience and education histories and shape how they uptake critical reading and thinking in first-year composition.

Domain 4: Material Conditions and Technologies

Composing is always subject to the material conditions of the rhetorical context; such material conditions might include time and space, knowledge, previous writing experiences, and access to production and distribution technologies. Students should critically attend to and reflect on material and ethical considerations in choosing and using information and technologies, acknowledging that they are not always in control of, or able to access the material conditions of any given rhetorical context.

Domain 5: Composing Processes

Students develop a variety of strategies to create a wide range of texts. The strategies composers use are seldom linear but rather iterative and recursive, often consisting of interlocking individual and collaborative activities that lead to a completed (for-now) project. Such recursive activities include critical thinking, planning, creating, revising, and (re)creating, based on composers' rhetorical situations, interactions with feedback and other composers, and

the material affordances that shape their composing. Reflection and metacognition help composers adapt as a project unfolds as well as to deepen writing knowledge and transfer.

Cross-Category Knowledge Domains

In addition to the five knowledge domains above, this statement includes three cross-category knowledge domains: areas of writing knowledge that relate to multiple domains above. For example, developing Genre knowledge involves Rhetorical Knowledge, Conventions and Language, Material Conditions and Technologies, and Composing Processes. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) impacts many writerly activities, and the discipline contests to what extent writing programs should teach GenAI, if at all. What learning outcomes match the values of the discipline and the program's definition of critical GenAI literacies? These domains are implicated yet so influential they cannot be flattened into one of the five domains. Therefore, these domains should be in consideration as WPAs design new learning outcomes according to the five knowledge domains.

Accessibility and Disability

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.

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Generally, specific kinds of digital technologies are not elevated to a learning outcome or domain. However, this cross domain for GenAI is predicated upon how writing programs are developing responses in different ways. The continuation of these cross-domains depends on the trajectory of the discipline's interventions. Students understand GenAI as a class of artificial intelligence systems that can create new content, such as text, images, audio, and video. Students familiarize themselves with GenAI's many forms, such as chat interfaces, features embedded in software, and AI agents. Students become aware of this technology's contributions to existing social inequalities, as well as its material impact on the environment, labor, creativity, human agency, and students' learning. At the discretion of program and university leadership, students critically reflect on what GenAI platforms do and do not add to learning composing processes, research methods, and other writerly activities.

Genre

Students understand that genre is a social action. That is, they understand that genres are purposeful responses by writers to recurring situations within contexts and communities, not simply categories of texts and their typical features. Genres help writers identify the conventions of a given text, whether it is primarily alphanumeric or multimodal, as well as the expectations for audiences who are familiar with these texts. Analyzing genres helps writers to understand unfamiliar texts.

Producing Contextually Situated Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Introduction

This document provides support for WPAs and composition instructors to develop contextually situated Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Readers will find an ideal process for developing contextually situated SLOs; however, there are contextual situation realities that not only inform what your specific SLOs should be but also provide the affordances and constraints that will impact your process. Taking time to deeply understand your context before outlining your process will make for stronger contextualized SLOs in the long run. And, as institutional contexts change, you will want to revisit, (re)develop, and assess your SLOs as an interactive process.

Below is an idealized framework to develop your process for producing contextually situated SLOs that best suit your institutional conditions, including but not limited to faculty attitudes, perceptions, and training; institutional mission; state legislation; student population; writing ecologies; and support systems such as WAC/WID programs and writing centers.

Researching

Before drafting, read scholarship on the theories and pedagogical practices that inform the field, research your local context, and develop a detailed plan to ensure an inclusive process. Some research steps to consider:

- **Read Scholarship**: As part of this document, we include a variety of suggestions of texts you and your team might read in Domain Supporting Documents.
- **Collect Local Examples**: Find copies of the first-year composition SLOs for peer and local institutions. Think in terms of accreditation for peers and transfer for regional institutions. (Consider dual credit/dual enrollment programs in your region, if applicable to your context.) Not only will these examples provide ideas of what is going on locally in terms of content and pedagogy, they'll also model the genre and style of SLOs that are regularly used in your connected contexts.
- **Identify Requirements**: Collect, review, and analyze information and/or requirements based on your contextual considerations (see below). At minimum, identify content and format requirements for the SLOs as well as other required procedures (e.g., assessment and accreditation requirements, shared governance processes, voting and approving bodies).
- **Outline Process**: After identifying any required processes in the department/unit, institution, and district/region, work with local stakeholders to identify any guidelines or best practices. Be sure to carefully identify the lists of and processes for (anonymous or not) collecting information and feedback from different groups of stakeholders. Try to acquire institutional commitment through resources like course buyouts, extra contracts, as well as food and materials for meetings.

- **Review Data**: Collect, review, and (cross-)analyze any assessment and/or student data from your own program(s). You might want to collect new data from students and instructors in your program and other stakeholders based on your contextual considerations (see below). Consider identifying individuals, groups, or offices that can help you pull and analyze data.

Drafting

We suggest that you keep authoring teams relatively small and incorporate diverse perspectives through robust inclusive feedback cycles. Once you start drafting material (see Possible Templates section), you might realize that you not only write and/or revise goals and SLOs, but you might also write/revise:

- course descriptions,
- suggestions or content for course curriculum and materials,
- assessment suggestions/plans/processes, and
- timelines and processes for revision.

Reviewing & Revising

You will want to get input from direct stakeholders like students, instructors, and administrators in the program. Do not be surprised by how many other people want to have input on the SLOs for required writing courses. Based on our experiences, taking the time to collect broad stakeholder feedback will later help with adoption and implementation. When collecting feedback be sure to provide participants with common language to use and explicit feedback and revision expectations. As you work with stakeholders, consider taking constituency acceptability votes above and beyond any required voting.

Contextual Considerations

There are many variables that impact both the content of as well as the process for developing SLOs. Below, we include a variety of possible contextual variables in hopes that they might prompt you to identify others unique to your context.

Institution & Program

The types of courses, programs, and institutions for and in which you are developing the SLOs will greatly impact content, format, and process.

- **Type of Institution**: Are you a two- or four-year institution of higher education? Are you a specialized institution? What transfer and articulation agreements does your institution have? How does your institution offer or articulate dual credit/dual enrollment credits?
- **Student Population**: What is your student population? How many students? What are their demographics? Where are your students from? Are they on-campus, commuter, or online students?

- **Catalog/Degree Requirements & Articulations**: What are the curricular requirements and offerings for your program? How many course options? What course levels? What are the course prefixes and numbers? What policies inform transfer and articulation?
- **Types of Campuses**: Are you producing SLOs for a traditional in-person campus? Online? International partner campus? If you have multiple campus offerings, do the SLOs need to be the same across campuses?
- **Types of Writing Programs**: Are you a traditional writing program focused on offering first-year composition classes? Do you offer developmental courses? Second Language Writing? Advanced-level writing? Writing Across the Curriculum? Writing Center?
- **Location of Program**: Where in the institutional organizational chart is your writing program located? An English department? An independent writing program or department? As part of a larger combined school or college?
- **Assessment & Accreditation Requirements**: Which accrediting body(ies) oversee your institutional accreditation? What requirements do they have for programmatic and course level SLOs? What assessment requirements?
- **Program & Institutional Histories**: Consider it a part of the research, review, and reflection process to identify relevant program and institutional histories that might provide insight to developing contextually situated SLOs.
- **Local Cultural Priorities**: Current administrators and other stakeholders, as well as strategic plans and policies, potentially influence your understanding of cultural considerations. Try to balance incorporating hyper-contextualized priorities (e.g., usually from a specific person in a precise time and space) with long-term institutional identity and goals.

Local Stakeholders/Guidelines

There are a number of people and policies that are interested and/or invested in writing program SLOs. At minimum, you may want to collect information from these groups; however, you might also include them as part of the process (e.g., either representatives on a smaller authoring team and/or groups with whom you hold meetings to discuss priorities, processes, and/or drafts).

- WPA/Rhet/Comp/Writing Studies Allies
- Instructors
- Students
- Any other WPs defined broadly (writing centers, WAC/WID, SLW/TESOL, etc.)
- Chain of command administrative positions
- Course placement individuals/units
- Campus assessment & accreditation individuals/units
- Campus administrative/student affairs research/data/analytics centers
- Advisors (esp. if revising course descriptions as well)
- Student Affairs/Success individuals/units
- Other institutional stakeholders (e.g., libraries staff, Honors programs, Educational Opportunity Programs, campus tutoring or student support centers)

- Local high school and/or community college writing/English administrators (i.e., transfer & dual credit considerations)
- Community stakeholders
- Legislative stakeholders
- Professional/workforce stakeholders
- Accrediting bodies

As you identify and engage with stakeholders, be sure to consider the material conditions of their ability to participate in producing, teaching, and assessing outcomes. For example, many writing programs are predominantly made up of contingent faculty with higher teaching/student loads and usually, especially in comparison to tenure track colleagues, lower salaries. If you consider this SLO production process in terms of its lifecycle, the unit and larger institution should be committed to providing resources for service, professional development, and assessment activities related to developing, implementing, assessing, and revising the SLOs and related curricular materials and policies.

Writing SLOs

Learning outcomes describe what students should know, be able to do, and or/value by the end of the course or program. Outcomes will focus on the knowledge students acquire, the skills they develop, and their emotional/affective development toward writing. Your learning outcomes should include the following features:

1. Aligned with university mission and goals, especially general education, if your program falls under the general education curriculum,
2. Specific, clear, and concise,
3. Observable and measurable,
4. Discrete,
5. Realistic and manageable, and
6. Use active verbs.

You can use the above features as a rubric to judge the accuracy of your learning outcomes. We recommend creating at least one SLO for each of the five knowledge domains for your first-year writing program. Upon review of the cross-category domains, you might create at least one SLO for any that you find relevant to your institutional and/or programmatic context.

Using Existing Cognitive Domain Frameworks to Develop SLOs

There are many cognitive domain frameworks that you can draw on to help develop your SLOs. Bloom's taxonomy is the most well-known hierarchical cognitive domain framework. While it has been revised in recent years, scholars in learning sciences and education now argue that Bloom's taxonomy no longer reflects current research on knowledge and cognition. Scholars have created other frameworks that reflect contemporary understanding of learning.

We do not advocate one framework over another, but we do encourage WPAs and their colleagues to consider the limitations and opportunities each framework offers in helping you empirically describe how and why your learning outcomes best fit the institution and the goals of the discipline. Below we provide a summary of each framework:

Bloom's Taxonomy

Education psychologist Benjamin Bloom published his taxonomy of learning in *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals* in 1956. He identified three learning domains: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. The area most commonly used is the cognitive domain, described across six areas. The domain chart below reflects the 2001 revisions of Bloom's original taxonomy. It has been widely used for decades in crafting learning goals and outcomes; however, educational psychologists believe the taxonomy is too hierarchical and may not reflect contemporary theories on learning. Although acceptable to use, it's important that you consider the drawbacks of Bloom's taxonomy and how to address those in your outcome design.

Cognitive Domain

Levels	**Definition**	**Sample Verbs**
Remember	Retrieve, recall, or recognize relevant knowledge from long-term memory	cite, define, describe, identify, label, list, match, name, outline, quote, recall, report, reproduce, retrieve, show, state, tabulate, tell
Understanding	Demonstrate comprehension through one or more forms of explanation	arrange, articulate, associate, categorize, clarify, classify, compare, compute, conclude, contrast, defend, diagram, differentiate, discuss, distinguish, estimate, exemplify, explain
Applying	Use information or a skill in a new situation	apply, calculate, carry out, classify, complete, compute, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, examine, execute,

		experiment, generalize, illustrate, implement, infer, interpret
Analyzing	Break material into its constituent parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and/or to an overall structure or purpose	analyze, arrange, break down, categorize, classify, compare, connect, contrast, deconstruct, detect, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish
Evaluating	Make judgments based on criteria and standards	appraise, apprise, argue, assess, compare, conclude, consider, contrast, convince, criticize, critique, decide, determine, discriminate, evaluate, grade, judge, justify
Creating	Put elements together to form a new coherent or functional whole; reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure	arrange, assemble, build, collect, combine, compile, compose, constitute, construct, create, design, develop, devise, generate, write

Marzano and Kendall's New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

This new taxonomy of educational objectives addresses some of the shortcomings of Bloom's Taxonomy, such as simplifying the nature of thought and its relationship to learning. Marzano and Kendall's educational objectives reflect an expansive view of cognition and learning.

Domain	**Domain Indicators Definitions**	**Sample Verbs**
Cognitive System		
	Retrieval Focuses on recalling and recognizing information	Identify, label, locate retrieve, list, name, state
	Integrating and symbolizing Involves understanding and interpreting information	Summarize, paraphrase, classify, categorize, generalize, diagram, chart
	Matching, classifying, analyzing errors,	Outline, identify, organize, differentiate, dissect, break

	generalizing, and specifying: Centers on breaking down information into parts, and understanding the relationships between components	down, analyze
	Knowledge utilization: Utilization involves applying knowledge in practical and complex ways	Apply, implement, carry out, use, operate, evaluate, assess, critique
Metacognitive System		
	Specifying goals, process monitoring, monitoring clarity, and monitoring accuracy: Responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and regulating one's own learning and problem-solving strategies	Strategize, outline, organize, prepare, map out, track, observe, supervise
Self-System		
	Examining importance, examining efficacy, examining emotional response, and examining overall motivation: Involves setting goals, maintaining motivation, and reflecting on one's own learning processes and emotional responses	Drive, contemplate, introspect, invest, pledge, dedicate, devote

Wiggins and McTighe's Six Facets of Understanding

Developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, The Six Facets of Understanding framework helps teachers identify how students understand course content. They identify six non-hierarchical areas of understanding that teachers can teach for and evaluate.

Facet 1: Explanation	Students will be able to explain how things work, how components connect, and why events happen, often with supporting evidence.

Facet 2: Interpretation	Students will be able to articulate the meaning of something beyond face value: an event's cultural significance, a data point's indications, or a symbol's meaning. They can produce creative work that strikes a deep chord of recognition and resonance within a given cultural context.
Facet 3: Application	Students will have the ability to use knowledge effectively in new situations and diverse realistic contexts—to assemble the appropriate ideas, knowledge, and actions to address and solve a new problem.
Facet 4: Perspective	Students can see things from different points of view, articulate the other side of the case, see the big picture, recognize underlying assumptions, and take a critical stance.
Facet 5: Empathy	Students will be able to enter another person's feelings and worldview and can anticipate or imagine their thoughts, feelings, and actions.
Facet 6: Self-Knowledge	Students will be able to explain how their own patterns of thought and action affect their understanding. Students notice and question their own ways of seeing the world—and their own limitations and inexpertise.

Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO)

Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes describes levels of progressively complex understanding through five categories. In other words, they describe a journey from an unknowing student to novice to expert. The first three levels of understanding help instructors learn how much their students know, for example. WPAs may arrange outcomes based on expected progressions of understanding across a sequence of courses, leading up to extended abstract as the final level of understanding about writing.

Learning Domain	**Definition**
1. Pre-structural	Students miss the point, don't understand, or don't know about a concept. Students think or say, "I need some help please."
2. Uni-structural	Students understand one thing about a topic but not be able

	to go into more depth in the “why” and “how.” Here students think or say, “I need a reminder.”
3. Multi-structural	Students know several things about a topic but have trouble connecting them into a coherent system. Here students think or say, “I can usually do well on my own but I make mistakes along the way.”
4. Relational	Students identify how multiple ideas or systems work together. They begin to say, “I know this but I also know the how and why behind it.”
5. Extended abstract	Students connect concepts, facts, and/or ideas together and extrapolate other possibilities or new knowledge beyond the context of their initial learning. Note this would be similar to students understanding how to transfer their writing across new contexts. Here students think or say, “I can look at the results of the work and I know what to do for other contexts.”

Further Reading

Anderson, Lorin W., and David R. Krathwohl, eds. *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 2001.

Beaufort, Anne. *College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction*. Utah State University Press, 2007.

Biggs, John, and Kevin F. Collis. *Evaluating the Quality of Learning: The SOLO Taxonomy (Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome)*. Academic Press, 1982.

Marzano, Robert J., and John S. Kendall. *The New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Corwin, 2006.

Wiggins, Grant, and Jay McTighe. *Understanding by Design*. Assn. for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2005.

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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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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