

AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

Council of Writing Program Administrators: A Statement of Outcomes (National) for First Year Writing Courses.

As the Council of Writing Program Administrators asserted in a statement adopted in April of 2000, “Learning to write is a complex process, both individual and social, that takes place over time with continued practice and informed guidance. Therefore, it is important that teachers, administrators, and a concerned public do not imagine that these outcomes can be taught in reduced or simple ways. Helping students demonstrate these outcomes requires expert understanding of how students actually learn to write.” To this end, the WPA Council provides a list of outcomes for freshman writing that can be grouped into four categories:

- 1) Rhetorical Knowledge*
- 2) Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing*
- 3) Processes, and*
- 4) Knowledge of Conventions.*

At the end of the Freshman Writing course, first year students should be expected to demonstrate ability in all four areas. These outcomes are listed in the following explanation, and they are drawn from the document “WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition,” adopted in April 2000. In this statement, the WPA also warns that teachers and administrators should not expect that the development of these skills can be ignored after the freshman course. Rather, they stress that these are skills that faculty in all programs and departments can help to build upon.

Rhetorical Knowledge

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Focus on a purpose
- Respond to the needs of different audiences
- Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
- Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
- Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- Understand how genres shape reading and writing
- Write in several genres

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating.
- Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding,

evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources.
Integrate their own ideas with those of others.
Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power.

Processes

By the end of first year composition, students should

Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text.
Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading.
Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work.
Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes.
Learn to critique their own and others' works.
Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part.
Use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences.

Knowledge of Conventions

By the end of first year composition, students should

Learn common formats for different kinds of texts.
Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics.
Practice appropriate means of documenting their work.
Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.