

Committee on General Education
Report to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

COGE met in September to receive reports and plan for the year.

The summer assessment project, led by Maureen Reddy, focused on *Writing in the Discipline* and *Critical/Creative Thinking*. The [full report](#) describes the process and contains recommendations for action.

The committee received the [annual report on First Year Writing](#) and the revised FYW [program outcomes](#) from Becky Caouette

Julie Urda submitted a report on [First Year Seminar](#).

[Course Enrollments for Fall 2017](#) are similar to those in [Fall 2016](#).

At the COGE meeting on October 20, the focus was on Writing in the Discipline. We will be reporting more fully in the next month.

Respectfully submitted,

James G. Magyar
October 20, 2017

See <http://www.ric.edu/faculty/organic/coge/> for the latest documents.

COGE membership 2017-2018

Name	Department	Constituency	Term
Denise Guilbault	Music, Theater, and Dance	Arts	2017-2019
David Espinosa	History	History	2016-2018
Olga Juzyn	Modern Languages	Language	2016-2018
Maureen Reddy	English	Literature	2017-2019
Stephanie Costa	Mathematics	Mathematics	2016-2018
James Magyar, Chair	Physical Science	Natural Science	2016-2018
Janice Okoomian	Gender and Women's Studies	Social and Behav- ioral Science	2016-2018
Tish Brennan	Reference	Adams Library	2017-2019
Julie Urda	School of Business	School of Business	2017-2019
Jeremy Benson	Educational Stud- ies	Feinstein School	2016-2018
Sharon Galloway	Nursing	School of Nursing	2017-2019
Stefan Battle	BSW	School of Social Work	2017-2019
Michael Michaud	English	<u>Chair of Writing Board</u> (or de- signee)	NA
Becky Caouette	English	<u>Director of Writing</u> (or designee)	NA
Julie Urda	FYS	FYS Coordinator	NA
Holly Shadoian	VPAA	VPAA or <u>designee</u>	NA
Earl Simson	Faculty of Arts and Sciences	<u>Dean, FAS</u> (or de- signee)	NA
Vacant	Student	Student	2017-2018

September 13, 2017

Report on Summer 2017 Assessment Projects

By Maureen Reddy, Assessment Coordinator

Background

Among the results of the summer 2016 assessment project, which involved reading a representative sample of senior papers from across the college and scoring them on three General Education Learning Outcomes (written communication, critical and creative thinking, and research fluency), was the finding that faculty in different disciplines did not have a shared understanding of how critical and creative thinking might be demonstrated in a paper, nor did they agree on the various components of the research fluency rubric when applied to senior-level papers from disciplines other than their own. Further, in faculty discussions of that 2016 report--hosted jointly by the Committee on General Education (COGE) and the assessment coordinator during the 2016-17 academic year--it became clear that although we knew where in the curriculum the various learning outcomes were introduced, we did not know exactly where they were reinforced and developed in students' careers at RIC. Given that the General Education curriculum was specifically designed to be vertical—the learning outcomes are *college* learning outcomes, meant to be achieved by the end of each student's baccalaureate program—this uncertainty was problematic. A chief motive for revising the General Education program in 2012 was NEASC's requirement that the program be assessed; the new program responded to that requirement by identifying clear student learning outcomes, thereby making the program assessable. Given that the purpose of assessment is to improve programs in order to increase student achievement, the lack of agreement about how to measure these outcomes has stalled progress: we cannot improve the program without first understanding how well it is working and we can't understand how well it is working if we cannot agree on evidence of student achievement of learning outcomes.

The 2016-17 academic year was the fifth year of what many still call the “new” General Education Program, and therefore issues of assessment and improvement are becoming increasingly urgent. Further, anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that we are now at the point at which students—and many faculty members—do not have a real understanding of the purposes of the program and see it as an assortment of boxes that each student needs to check off in order to graduate. College-wide discussions of learning outcomes could help to remedy that problem, but those discussions are unlikely to be productive without better definitions and guidelines than we now have. The summer 2017 assessment project was created in cooperation with COGE to begin to address some of these issues.

The summer project built on work done by the chair of COGE during the 2016-17 academic year to gather information from departments about where various learning outcomes were addressed in their major (e.g., oral communication) and how their discipline would define critical and creative thinking. COGE put aside clarifying the research fluency rubric in order to defer to a committee already

working on a revision of that rubric to bring it in line with new guidelines on information fluency from the American Library Association. COGE did, however, look closely at the courses departments and programs had identified as their writing in the discipline (WID) courses and found that some programs still had no such courses approved by COGE and also that the WID webpage linked from the General Education webpage had many disabled or dead links. In addition, we had only a vague statement about WID courses to guide departments when they were asked to identify the department's WID courses. The chair of COGE and the assessment coordinator agreed to begin the work needed by holding two all-day discussion sessions with faculty members from across the college to develop recommendations and guidelines to address both WID and critical and creative thinking concerns. Participants in each session were provided with articles and other materials and asked to do some reading and thinking in advance of their session. The rest of this report focuses on suggestions that emerged from those two sessions.

Writing in the Discipline (WID)

Participants: Mikaila Arthur (Sociology), Jeremy Benson (FSEHD, Ed Studies), Praveena Gullapalli (Anthropology), Jeanne Haser Lafond (SoM, Accounting/CIS), Quenby Hughes (History), Rebeka Merson (Biology), Janice Okoomian (Gender & Women's Studies), Megan Smith (Psychology), Jeremy Thayer (SSW) Michael Michaud, chair of the Writing Board, attended a portion of the meeting and provided information to help guide the discussion.

The specific goals of this session were to describe clearly for COGE what all WID courses should include in order to: improve the mapping of GenEd learning goals, offer departments better guidelines as they develop/improve their WID requirements, make decisions about assessment of this GenEd requirement, and recommend resources.

Recommendations about what all WID courses should include:

Ideally, each department/program should identify at least two courses in which writing for the discipline is taught consciously. One should be at the sophomore level and one at the senior level. The lower-level course should include transparently-taught introductions to several forms of writing common to the field; the upper-level course should develop students' work in some of the forms of writing taught in the lower-level course. Every WID course should *teach* writing, not just assign and evaluate it, with students offered opportunities for drafting and revision and writing instruction incorporated into the class content.

Recommendations about COGE's next steps:

- Develop a statement for faculty members about implementing WID in general, aimed at allaying fears and clarifying requirements (for example, that statement should include the comments that not everything students write in a WID course must be graded, drafting could be peer-review based, writing assignments already in use can be modified to fit WID requirements)

by phasing an assignment, and so on, as well as a clear explanation of “writing to learn”).

- Develop a college-wide WID statement to be included on every program/department’s WID course’s syllabus and also on the General Education webpage.
- Ask that each program/department develop a program/department-specific WID statement to be included on the syllabi for their WID courses and also posted on the General Education webpage for WID courses. Emphasize that developing and explaining WID elements should be a *department’s* responsibility, not the work of a chair. To encourage department-wide conversations, perhaps COGE could offer lunch tickets for mini-retreats. Those conversations should center on several questions: why is writing important in our discipline? What does writing in our discipline look like (the rhetorical situation)? Where and how do we teach or should we teach writing in our discipline? COGE should develop a template for such statements.
- Develop a webpage designed for students that includes the answers to a series of common WID questions written by each department’s faculty, and that identifies the classes that qualify for WID status and why. (note: many other colleges and universities have such a page, and so there are good models from which we could work)
- Develop a compliance mechanism for courses designated as meeting the WID requirement (such as collecting and reviewing syllabi on a regular schedule).
- Sponsor an annual workshop for faculty teaching WID (in cooperation with the FCTL and the Writing Board).
- Recommend that each faculty member teaching WID attend at least one more extensive writing pedagogy workshop (again, FCTL and the Writing Board are resources for this possibility).
- Work with the Writing Center Director to investigate the possibility of having trained undergraduate peer writing mentors from different disciplines available for WID courses

Recommendations about coordination and assessment:

At least for the initial work, which is considerable, the college should appoint a faculty member to serve as WID coordinator (parallel to the FYS coordinator). That person would develop the WID website (see below for specific items to be included), gather materials from departments and work with those that ask for assistance in developing their WID statements, and facilitate continuing improvement for WID, including working with departments on assessment options. Assessment properly belongs with each program/department because the WID courses are part of their curricula. COGE and the assessment coordinator should encourage departments to include assessment of WID courses and to report results to COGE to help with ongoing assessment and improvement of the General Education program. Finally, we would like to see WID included and clearly identified on the Rhode Maps for each major.

Recommendations about specific elements of a student-facing WID website:

- General statement about writing at RIC and definition of WID
- Answers to questions for each department to address, and to include:
 - What is writing in the discipline of X?
 - Why is writing crucial to the discipline of X?
 - Why will learning about writing in the field help prepare students for the future?
 - What are some of the common writing tasks that someone in the discipline might encounter?
 - What are the courses that qualify for WID in the department?
- Writing Guides in the each discipline (brief; Harvard's 4-page model is useful), including common types of writing assigned in that discipline and a style sheet or link to a site with such a style sheet (e.g., MLA for English).
- Section on WID resources for students, including information about discipline-specific writing tutors and links to useful websites.

Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT)

Participants: Jeremy Benson (FSEHD, Ed Studies), Suzanne Conklin (Biology), Jeanne Haser Lafond (SoM, Accounting/CIS), Elisa Miller (History), Tamara Nopper (Sociology), Janice Okoomian (Gender & Women's Studies), Sylvia Ross (Nursing), Megan Smith (Psychology), Jeremy Thayer (SSW)

The specific goals of this session were to describe clearly for COGE definitions of critical and creative thinking that will be more useful than the ones we currently have; to devise a draft rubric for CCT learning outcomes to replace the current one; and to make recommendations about assessment of this GenEd outcome.

Recommendations about General Education overall:

A wide-ranging discussion about RIC students' understanding (or lack thereof) of the GenEd program and why they are required to take courses outside their majors resulted in a broad recommendation that COGE launch an ongoing information and marketing effort to explain the program and the meaning of a baccalaureate degree to both faculty and students. We might use the new "Cogitations" newsletter as a vehicle to reach faculty members. Further, the very term itself—"general education"—is neither interesting nor descriptive; perhaps using a term such as "breadth" (as the U of California system does) might be helpful.

Recommendations about critical and creative thinking outcome(s):

The group agreed that problems in assessing critical and creative thinking are rooted in the two learning outcomes being treated as one instead of separated. Although creative thinking requires critical thinking, they are not the same; yoking them together into one learning outcome does not make sense. As one participant put it, "Critical thinking is about being able to identify and explain the box that creative thinking demands that we think outside." Every program or department

includes critical thinking; not every program or department should be expected to include creative thinking. In some fields, the emphasis in the undergraduate years is properly on teaching the fundamental concepts and skills of the discipline, with creative approaches discouraged until those fundamental are mastered. We recommend that the two be revised into two distinct outcomes, each with its own definition and rubric.

The current critical and creative thinking outcome actually describes *only* critical thinking:

“Critical and Creative Thinking Students will be able to analyze and interpret information from multiple perspectives, question assumptions and conclusions, and understand the impact of biases, including their own, on thinking and learning.”

We recommend that the existing phrasing be dropped and that the following be substituted:

“Creative Thinking Students will be able to combine existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways appropriate to the task at hand and work in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation and risk taking.”

“Critical Thinking Students will be able to actively and skillfully conceptualize, question, apply, analyze, synthesize, and/or evaluate information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication.”

Recommendations about rubrics and assessment:

One of the chief difficulties raters experienced in scoring papers during the 2016 project was the limited number of options (0-4) on the rating scale. Research in the social sciences suggests that (1) people resist assigning a zero to an item they are scoring and (2) a seven-point scale is standard and offer a far more useful set of scores for analysis than does a four-point scale. However, there is no need to elaborate on every level of the 7-point scale; instead, one can treat 2, 4, and 6 as “mid-points,” equivalent to a half point, when a paper being scored falls between two stages of the rubric.

The current rubric looks like this:

3 highly-developed stage

2 developed stage

1 emerging stage

0 non-existent

We recommend that COGE shift to a 7-point rating system for all of its rubrics, titled as follows:

7 highly-developed stage

6

5 developed stage

4

3 emerging stage

2

1 non-existent

Such a shift is likely to make rating artifacts easier and also to result in more detailed, reliable, and therefore useful assessment data.

See appendix 1 of this report for recommended new rubrics for assessing creative thinking and critical thinking. These rubrics are revised versions of the CCT rubrics drafted in 2013 and the one currently in use.

Appendix 1

Rubrics for Assessing General Education

Critical Thinking Rubric:

Critical thinking is an open minded and intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, questioning, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication.

Student...	7 Highly-Developed Stage	5 Developed Stage	3 Emerging Stage	1 Non-Existent
Demonstrates Understanding of the Problem, Question or Issue	The question, problem or issue to be considered critically is significant and complex and is stated clearly and described thoroughly, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	The question, problem or issue to be considered critically has limited significance or complexity. It is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions	The question, problem or issue to be considered critically is relatively basic, uninteresting or insignificant. It is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	The question, problem or issue to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Considers Underlying Assumptions	Assumptions of self or others are considered thoroughly.	Assumptions of self or others are considered partially.	Assumptions of self or others are identified, but are not integrated into the discussion.	Assumptions of self or others are not considered.
Selects and Then Analyzes Evidence for Reasoning	Evidence selected is relevant, well-chosen, and analyzed carefully.	Evidence selected is relevant and subjected to some basic analysis.	Evidence is selected but only occasionally, or is either not relevant or not analyzed.	No evidence is selected or analyzed.
Draws and Communicates Own Conclusions, Perspective, Hypothesis, or Position	Position presented is clear and sophisticated, addressing the complexity of the issue, with logical, relevant, and thorough reasons.	Position is clear and adequate but lacks complexity. Reasons provided are logical and relevant, but not thorough.	Position is simplistic, unclear, obvious or just repeats another's position. Reasons are provided but only occasionally, or are not logical or sufficiently relevant.	Perspective, hypothesis or position is missing. No reasons are provided.

Creative Thinking Rubric:

Creative Thinking reflects the capacity to combine existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways appropriate to the task at hand and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation and risk taking.

Student...	7 Highly-Developed Stage	5 Developed Stage	3 Emerging Stage	1 Non-Existent
Presents Evidence of Flexible Thought	Effectively and flexibly uses a broad range of strategies appropriate to the task at hand, including some which are unexpected or novel.	Uses more than one strategy appropriate to the task at hand, and uses them in a flexible and effective manner.	Uses more than one strategy to address the task, but poorly, or uses a single strategy flexibly, or uses a strategy not appropriate to the task.	Uses only one strategy to address the task, which may not be an appropriate strategy for the task, and uses it rigidly.
Produces Something Original	Transforms or goes beyond existing ideas or solutions by creating something new to the student.	Creates an idea, question, format or product with significant elements that are novel or unique to the student.	Makes a new to the student application of existing ideas, questions, formats or products.	Merely reports or repeats existing ideas, questions, formats or products.
Demonstrates Intellectual Courage	Significantly challenges conventional wisdom or established ideas with an innovative approach or idea that is appropriate to the task.	Goes beyond the confines of conventional wisdom or established ideas without challenging them, but with adding an innovative approach or idea appropriate to the task.	Goes beyond the confines of conventional wisdom or established authority, but with an approach or idea that is not appropriate to the task.	Takes no risk.



**First Year Writing Program
Rhode Island College
Annual Report
2016-2017**

1. *Complete the DSP Pilot*

In spring of 2017, the FYW Program pilot of Directed Self-Placement (DSP) concluded, and DSP as the placement method for RIC was unanimously approved by relevant stakeholders and administrators. This pilot was active for approximately five years and progressed through numerous phases.

In the Appendix, readers will find the executive summary of the final report of the DSP pilot. Our goal now is to refine the DSP process to insure that it meets the needs of all incoming FY students *and* that it accurately reflects the revised goals and outcomes of the FYW Program. We will also work with the Preparatory Enrollment Program (PEP) and with students who are admitted via the Performance-Based Admission Program (PBA). We will also continue to revise and update our methods and resources.

2. *Revise Outcomes for FYW Program*

The FYW Program has published new program-specific outcomes. Their creation has been a two-year process: the English Department's Composition Committee members met with focus groups of FYW instructors to draft the outcomes; we workshopped the outcomes at professional development events; and we elicited feedback digitally. These outcomes wed some of the most current research in FYW with the local needs and expectations of Rhode Island College. While FYW is mandated by COGE to meet four General Education Outcomes, these programmatic outcomes speak to the ways in which FYW instructors may choose to do so. In addition, shared outcomes ideally eliminate the need for common textbooks and/or a common syllabus, thereby enabling instructors a measure of freedom in the design of their sections.

A copy of the outcomes is available in the Appendix of this document.

3. *Begin to articulate relationship between FYW and WID courses*

The Director of Writing is a member of both COGE and the Writing Board. As such, she attended the COGE-sponsored WID discussion group on 8 February 2017.

We are hopeful that the publication/sharing of the FYW Program outcomes contributes to future conversations about WID expectations and outcomes. Understanding the kinds of work done in FYW will, we hope, allow WID instructors to build on this work in discipline-specific ways. We look forward to the opportunities to assist the Writing Board and other entities in this mission.

4. *Continue to offer professional development opportunities for instructors of FYW*

The FYW Program continues to offer quality professional development that focuses on community building, articulation of goals, and shared commitment to student learning. As in the past, we offered several professional development opportunities this past academic year; these are in addition to regular college-wide events such as our co-sponsored Writing Week events:

- FYW Program Annual August Summit (25 August 2016)
 - *Focus: multimodality*
- FYW Program Annual Mini-Summit (10 January 2017)
 - *Focus: Outcomes, publication of Tips for Teachers handbook*
- Instructor Invitationals
 - Doug Collins (3 October 2016)
 - Clarissa Walker (10 November 2016)
 - Ryan Burns (30 November 2016)
 - Ellen Partridge (29 March 2017)
 - David Malley (19 April 2017)

Future Goals (2017-2018 and beyond)*

1. **Revise the DSP questionnaire so as to better align with program outcomes and goals**
2. **Work with college leaders and stakeholders to more accurately address the needs of ELL/multilingual students**
3. **Continue efforts to articulate relationship between FYW and WID courses**
4. **Continue to offer professional development opportunities for instructors of FYW**

**Please note that the current Director of Writing, Becky Caouette, will be on sabbatical for spring 2018. As of this writing, the temporary Director for that period has not yet been announced, and so the future goals may be modified according to their wishes and expectations.*

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Final Report: Directed Self-Placement (DSP) Pilot Conclusion and Recommendation

Submitted by FYW Program (Becky Caouette, Director of Writing)

17 April 2017

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Summary: Beginning in 2012, the FYW program has worked continuously with the Writing Center and OASIS to pilot a new FYW placement method for incoming first-year and transfer students. Prior to 2012, students who scored above a 430 in both the written and verbal components of the SAT were placed into FYW 100 (then WRTG 100); students with a 430 or below on either the written or the verbal components were required to sit for a writing placement exam. Exams were read by two scorers (in the case of a tie, three), who would decide if students could enroll in FYW 100 or FYW 010 (then ENGL 010).

The exigence to pilot a new placement method was multi-faceted, but major factors included: research on standardized testing bias; evidence of the arbitrary nature of cut-off scores for standardized tests; questions regarding the validity and reliability of writing placement exams as placement methods; ethical concerns regarding Writing Center labor and resources (including monetary); early research indicating success in the use of DSP at institutions similar to RIC; and opportunities to foster honest conversations about writing, preparedness, and confidence among students, advisors, instructors, and staff.

The Directed Self-Placement (DSP) pilot has been in place for several years and has progressed through several phases. In the current iteration, a large majority of students enrolled in FYW courses choose which of the four courses (FYW 010, FYW 100, FYW 100H, FYW 100P) best meets their needs. More information was provided in a report from 22 March 2016 (a copy of which is available below).

Given the results of a 2015-2016 survey of students and faculty in FYW, and in consultation with OASIS and the Writing Center, the FYW Program recommends that the DSP pilot conclude and that *DSP become the approved writing placement method at RIC*. In making this recommendation, we recognize that DSP is not perfect, that methods need to be revised in light of institutional and programmatic changes as well as changes to the student body, and that ongoing communication will

be key. In addition, research in placement/writing assessment methods continues in writing-related fields; RIC's placement methods should work to reflect the most recent scholarship and findings as applicable to our institution.

The FYW Program, in partnership with OASIS and the Writing Center, considers the following:

Spring Registration: Our student and faculty survey results from spring 2016 suggest that some students may have difficulty recalling their DSP Orientation session from the previous June. The FYW Program is also working to make sure students recall or (re)consider their placement choices for spring. For example, we work with the Director of Faculty Advising to consider ways to remind students about DSP during spring registration. We are also exploring, with Orientation and OASIS, techniques to provide students with reminders, or to record student choice, for reference during spring registration. As in the past, the Director of Writing emails all enrolled FYW students in January to remind them of their DSP sessions and of the resources available to them. Instructors in all FYW sections assign, collect, and read a first-week writing sample in the fall and spring as a final placement check; they also review the DSP process, and we have stressed the increased importance of this for spring term.

Changes to the Process: While we hope to officially end the piloting of DSP, the placement process will evolve in light of new information and materials. For example, the FYW Program recently revised its Outcomes and anticipates implementing them for the fall 2017 semester. In order to insure that our DSP questionnaire is valid, we will have to revise the questionnaire to reflect the Outcomes in the FYW Program. Likewise, research in DSP evolves, and we will adjust our placement methods to reflect new findings or methods.

Accessibility for All: Select student groups still do not fully participate in DSP; these include PBA students and those in PEP and the Honors Program. Our goal is to find a way for all students to participate in DSP while still acknowledging the particular needs and concerns of these student groups, and we work with program administrators to achieve this goal. Maria Muccio, PEP Coordinator, and the Director of Writing will determine any additional support PEP students may need for spring 2018 integration of PEP students into the DSP process. In addition, the Writing Center will continue to offer the Writing Placement Exam to students who request it as part of their placement decision-making process. Finally, we will continue to work with OASIS to provide placement information to all first-year students enrolled in the college.

Thank you for this opportunity to think more carefully about the writing needs of our student population and the ways in which placement can aid student success and confidence.

FYW Program Outcomes
(for FYW 100, 100P, 100H)
Rhode Island College
Version 1.0: May 2017

At Rhode Island College, FYW courses in General Education (FYW 100; FYW 100Plus; FYW 100Honors) meet four General Education Outcomes (Written Communication; Critical and Creative Thinking; Research Fluency; and Collaborative Work). We also draw heavily on the Writing Program Administrators (WPA) Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (v3.0) and refer readers to that Statement for a more thorough discussion of some of the items below. In the interest of localizing the WPA Outcomes Statement, we provide this document.

We remind readers that FYW courses are introductory; none of the outcomes listed below will be “complete” upon conclusion of the course. The FYW Program expects that students will have opportunities to build on these “habits of mind” at other points in their academic and professional careers. At RIC, students can expect to build on these outcomes in the following ways:

- General Education courses that address the Written Communication Outcome
- Writing in the Disciplines (WID) course(s) in every major
- Experiential learning and/or capstone courses

In the following document, we articulate two overarching Outcomes. The first, rhetorical situation, enables understanding as to how elements of the rhetorical situation (see below) help shape our composing choices. The second, awareness of process, suggests that students should engage in writing as a process—that writers enact different writing strategies and habits at different (and sometimes recursive) moments of composing. Together, these outcomes help students understand and discover the best available tools and resources so as to create the most effective texts possible. Research shows that these two outcomes are among several that help students transfer that which they learned in FYW to other writing courses and tasks.

Rhetorical Situation

Writers and designers compose in response to rhetorical situations. The most effective and persuasive writing responds, as much as possible, to different elements of the rhetorical situation. These include, but are not limited to:

- ∞ Author
- ∞ Audience
- ∞ Purpose
- ∞ Exigence
- ∞ Genre
- ∞ Constraints/Contexts
- ∞ Media

Upon successful completion of FYW, students should

- be introduced to the concept of writing as rhetorical and situational
- be introduced to different elements of the rhetorical situation
- have the opportunity to see how a writer’s ability to analyze and respond to rhetorical situations helps determine the effectiveness of a text
- understand how changes in the rhetorical situation (i.e., a new audience or a different purpose) may affect the text produced
- consider how rhetorical modes might work together to create persuasive texts (multimodal)
- consider how technology and diverse media influence, respond to, and/or create rhetorical situations (multimedia)
- have the opportunity to compose multimodal and multimedial texts
- have the opportunity to compose in response to rhetorical situations. That is: as much as possible, student-authored texts in FYW should respond to and help create real rhetorical situations

Process

Effective writing nearly always relies on a process that is somewhat dependent on the writer and rhetorical situation (a timed essay exam, for example, might allow for fewer significant revisions; a white paper might require a great deal of research).

Upon successful completion of FYW 100/100P/100H, students should be familiar with the following concepts and should have had opportunities to employ each of them during the semester. While elements of the writing process are listed here in a manner that may convey chronology or linearity, each concept may be employed at different points in a writing task; repeatedly; or not at all. And each concept loops back to another: research can be an invention strategy, while editing might lead to revision. Finally, a student’s ability to reflect on their writing process and rhetorical choices throughout that process, and to write, research, revise, or edit in response to such reflections, is critical. Responding to such reflections is an integral part of a writer’s process.

∞ Invention

Definition: This category is often called the pre-writing stage of writing and often involves heuristics such as brainstorming, freewriting, pre-writing, mapping, outlining, etc. But the label of “pre-writing” suggests that invention is the first task of writing; in reality, students may be called upon to invent and reinvent for a number of reasons.

FYW: In FYW courses, students should be offered

- time and space to explore concepts
- opportunities to try out new ideas
- opportunities to build on the work and ideas of others
- opportunities to discover areas of inquiry based on data and research
- opportunities to draw on prior knowledge and cultural experiences

∞ Research

Definition: The “[Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education](#)” is a comprehensive document that works to define research. For the purposes of FYW, we emphasize the introductory nature of the course and the iterative nature of research. Research is the access, evaluation, and use of information from beyond the writer/author’s personal knowledge. Research can inform all stages in a student’s writing process

FYW: In FYW courses, students should engage in discussion and practice concerning

- what constitutes a credible source for each student’s project
- how one might evaluate sources for their credibility, usefulness, and accuracy
- how students might search (and re-search) for credible information
- how students might work credibly with the ideas of others in the student’s own text (summary, paraphrase, quotation, insertion, etc.)
- how research in academic disciplines, for difference purposes, audiences, and genres, might affect how one conducts, locates, and uses research
- why attribution and citation are important, with an understanding that different rhetorical situations call for different types and kinds of attribution and citation

∞ Drafting and Revision

Definition: Drafting is the act of writing or creating version(s) of a text. Drafts can be exploratory, unfinished, unpolished, and unedited; they often are part of the invention process. Revision is the act of reviewing/re-envisioning a draft in order to make changes to the draft, ideally in light of audience feedback; writers revise in order to better respond to a rhetorical situation in both content and style. The goal of revision, in general, is to produce more effective texts.

FYW: In FYW courses, students should be encouraged

- to draft as many versions of a text as practical in a given semester/session
- to revise each draft carefully and deliberately
- to see earlier drafts as often incomplete and messy
- to distinguish between the conventions of a draft and that of a finished text
- to distinguish between revising and editing
- to solicit feedback from audience members, in a variety of ways: written and verbal comments; peer review sessions; individual and group conferences
- to use feedback to create more effective drafts through revision
- to move from revision to submission of draft

∞ Proofreading and Editing

Definition: Proofreading is the practice of rereading/reviewing/revisiting a text with an eye towards surface-level clarity; it may require a review of grammar, mechanics, usage, design, and conventions. Editing is the practice of making surface-level changes to a text, often in response to careful proofreading.

FYW: In FYW courses, students should be encouraged

- to see proofreading and editing as often one of the final steps in the writing process—that proofreading and editing should not interfere with invention, drafting, revision, or research
- to consider issues of correctness and standardization as social conventions
- to distinguish between global and local issues in writing
- to understand that issues of grammar, mechanics, usage, design, and convention are not always about correctness, but are rather about purpose, audience, and ethos
- to see technology as one of several tools writers employ when proofreading and editing

First-Year Writing Statistics Fall 2016
Reflects totals from the close of the add/drop period

Sections 010.....	03
Sections 100.....	30
Sections 100H.....	02
Sections 100Plus.....	04
Total Sections First Year Writing.....	39

Adjunct Faculty/Emeriti.....	22
TT/FT Faculty.....	03
Part-time faculty.....	01
Total Instructors.....	26

Sections

1. **7.7%** of all sections are taught by full-time/tenure-track faculty (3)
2. **2.6 %** of all sections are taught by part-time faculty (Writing Center Director) (1)
3. **89.7%** of all sections are taught by adjunct faculty/Emeriti (35)

Staffing

1. **~12%** of total instructors are tenure-track/full-time faculty (3)
2. **~85%** of total instructors are adjunct faculty/Emeriti (22)
3. **~4%** of total instructors are part-time faculty (Writing Center Director) (1)

FYW 010

Capacity is 10 students

of sections below cap: 3 (total of 14 open seats)
 # of sections at cap: 0
 # of sections over: 0

- FYW 010 is at **53.33% capacity**.

First Year Writing 100

Capacity is 20 students

of sections below cap: 3 (total of 5 open seats)
 # of sections at capacity: 26
 # of sections over capacity: (@21): 1

- FYW 100 is at **99.3% capacity**

(continued on next page)

First Year Writing Statistics Spring 2017
Reflects totals from the close of the add/drop period

Sections 010.....	0
Sections 100.....	27
Sections 100P.....	04
Sections 100H.....	01
Total Sections First-Year Writing.....	32

Adjunct Faculty/Emeritus.....	17
TT/FT Faculty.....	05
Total Instructors.....	22

Sections

4. **16%** of all sections are taught by tenure-track faculty (5)
5. **84%** of all sections are taught by adjuncts/Emeritus (27)

Staffing

4. **23%** of total instructors are tenure-track/full-time faculty (5)
5. **77%** of total instructors are adjunct faculty/Emeritus (17)

FYW 010

No sections of FYW 010 spring 2017

First Year Writing 100

Capacity is 20 students

of sections below cap: 4 (total of 10 open seats)
 # of sections at capacity: 21
 # of sections over capacity: (@21): 2

- FYW 100 is at **98.5% capacity**

First Year Writing 100PLUS

Capacity is 15 students

of sections below cap: 4 (total of 21 open seats)
 # of sections at capacity: 0
 # of sections over capacity: 0

- FYW 100Plus is at **65% capacity**

(Continued on next page)

First Year Writing 100Honors

Capacity is 15 students

of sections below cap: 1 (total of 4 open seats)

of sections at capacity: 0

of sections over capacity: 0

➤ FYW 100Honors is at **73% capacity**

FYW Program Outcomes
(for FYW 100, 100P, 100H)
Rhode Island College
Version 1.0: May 2017

At Rhode Island College, FYW courses in General Education (FYW 100; FYW 100Plus; FYW 100Honors) meet four General Education Outcomes (Written Communication; Critical and Creative Thinking; Research Fluency; and Collaborative Work). We also draw heavily on the Writing Program Administrators (WPA) Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (v3.0) and refer readers to that Statement for a more thorough discussion of some of the items below. In the interest of localizing the WPA Outcomes Statement, we provide this document.

We remind readers that FYW courses are introductory; none of the outcomes listed below will be “complete” upon conclusion of the course. The FYW Program expects that students will have opportunities to build on these “habits of mind” at other points in their academic and professional careers. At RIC, students can expect to build on these outcomes in the following ways:

- General Education courses that address the Written Communication Outcome
- Writing in the Disciplines (WID) course(s) in every major
- Experiential learning and/or capstone courses

In the following document, we articulate two overarching Outcomes. The first, rhetorical situation, enables understanding as to how elements of the rhetorical situation (see below) help shape our composing choices. The second, awareness of process, suggests that students should engage in writing as a process—that writers enact different writing strategies and habits at different (and sometimes recursive) moments of composing. Together, these outcomes help students understand and discover the best available tools and resources so as to create the most effective texts possible. Research shows that these two outcomes are among several that help students transfer that which they learned in FYW to other writing courses and tasks.

Rhetorical Situation

Writers and designers compose in response to rhetorical situations. The most effective and persuasive writing responds, as much as possible, to different elements of the rhetorical situation. These include, but are not limited to:

- ∞ Author
- ∞ Audience
- ∞ Purpose
- ∞ Exigence
- ∞ Genre
- ∞ Constraints/Contexts
- ∞ Media

Upon successful completion of FYW, students should

- be introduced to the concept of writing as rhetorical and situational
- be introduced to different elements of the rhetorical situation
- have the opportunity to see how a writer’s ability to analyze and respond to rhetorical situations helps determine the effectiveness of a text
- understand how changes in the rhetorical situation (i.e., a new audience or a different purpose) may affect the text produced
- consider how rhetorical modes might work together to create persuasive texts (multimodal)
- consider how technology and diverse media influence, respond to, and/or create rhetorical situations (multimedia)
- have the opportunity to compose multimodal and multimedial texts
- have the opportunity to compose in response to rhetorical situations. That is: as much as possible, student-authored texts in FYW should respond to and help create real rhetorical situations

Process

Effective writing nearly always relies on a process that is somewhat dependent on the writer and rhetorical situation (a timed essay exam, for example, might allow for fewer significant revisions; a white paper might require a great deal of research).

Upon successful completion of FYW 100/100P/100H, students should be familiar with the following concepts and should have had opportunities to employ each of them during the semester. While elements of the writing process are listed here in a manner that may convey chronology or linearity, each concept may be employed at different points in a writing task; repeatedly; or not at all. And each concept loops back to another: research can be an invention strategy, while editing might lead to revision. Finally, a student’s ability to reflect on their writing process and rhetorical choices throughout that process, and to write, research, revise, or edit in response to such reflections, is critical. Responding to such reflections is an integral part of a writer’s process.

∞ Invention

Definition: This category is often called the pre-writing stage of writing and often involves heuristics such as brainstorming, freewriting, pre-writing, mapping, outlining, etc. But the label of “pre-writing” suggests that invention is the first task of writing; in reality, students may be called upon to invent and reinvent for a number of reasons.

FYW: In FYW courses, students should be offered

- time and space to explore concepts
- opportunities to try out new ideas
- opportunities to build on the work and ideas of others
- opportunities to discover areas of inquiry based on data and research
- opportunities to draw on prior knowledge and cultural experiences

∞ Research

Definition: The “[Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education](#)” is a comprehensive document that works to define research. For the purposes of FYW, we emphasize the introductory nature of the course and the iterative nature of research. Research is the access, evaluation, and use of information from beyond the writer/author’s personal knowledge. Research can inform all stages in a student’s writing process

FYW: In FYW courses, students should engage in discussion and practice concerning

- what constitutes a credible source for each student’s project
- how one might evaluate sources for their credibility, usefulness, and accuracy
- how students might search (and re-search) for credible information
- how students might work credibly with the ideas of others in the student’s own text (summary, paraphrase, quotation, insertion, etc.)
- how research in academic disciplines, for difference purposes, audiences, and genres, might affect how one conducts, locates, and uses research
- why attribution and citation are important, with an understanding that different rhetorical situations call for different types and kinds of attribution and citation

∞ Drafting and Revision

Definition: Drafting is the act of writing or creating version(s) of a text. Drafts can be exploratory, unfinished, unpolished, and unedited; they often are part of the invention process. Revision is the act of reviewing/re-envisioning a draft in order to make changes to the draft, ideally in light of audience feedback; writers revise in order to better respond to a rhetorical situation in both content and style. The goal of revision, in general, is to produce more effective texts.

FYW: In FYW courses, students should be encouraged

- to draft as many versions of a text as practical in a given semester/session
- to revise each draft carefully and deliberately
- to see earlier drafts as often incomplete and messy
- to distinguish between the conventions of a draft and that of a finished text
- to distinguish between revising and editing
- to solicit feedback from audience members, in a variety of ways: written and verbal comments; peer review sessions; individual and group conferences
- to use feedback to create more effective drafts through revision
- to move from revision to submission of draft

∞ Proofreading and Editing

Definition: Proofreading is the practice of rereading/reviewing/revisiting a text with an eye towards surface-level clarity; it may require a review of grammar, mechanics, usage, design, and conventions. Editing is the practice of making surface-level changes to a text, often in response to careful proofreading.

FYW: In FYW courses, students should be encouraged

- to see proofreading and editing as often one of the final steps in the writing process—that proofreading and editing should not interfere with invention, drafting, revision, or research
- to consider issues of correctness and standardization as social conventions
- to distinguish between global and local issues in writing
- to understand that issues of grammar, mechanics, usage, design, and convention are not always about correctness, but are rather about purpose, audience, and ethos
- to see technology as one of several tools writers employ when proofreading and editing

July 30, 2017

2016-17 End-of-year FYS Report

Courses

Julie Urda remained as FYS Coordinator during the 2016-17 academic year. We offered 30 sections of FYS in Fall 2016 and 32 in Spring 2016. In the spring semester, we held an information-gathering session for all FYS faculty to discuss what was working and what could be improved with FYS going forward. The notes from that discussion are in exhibit 1 attached.

FYS Hold

We also implemented a new policy to place an FYS hold on registration accounts for students who have not completed an FYS within their first 30 credits. This new policy has had excellent results. First-year students now take the FYS requirement much more seriously and we have only a handful of students left taking FYS in their sophomore year.

Advisory Committee

Finally, we organized an FYS Advisory Committee (AC) to assist the FYS coordinator in making policy decisions that she felt should not be made unilaterally. This AC met once in the spring and twice in the summer to create several new plans for COGE to consider during Fall 2017. They are as follows:

New FYS Outcomes

Based on the results of the FYS faculty meeting in Spring 2017, four practical outcomes have been suggested as additions to five academic outcomes to be required for all FYS courses. These are:

- Introduction to computer skills at RIC
- Introduction to campus resources
- Introduction to practical skills
- Introduction to College expectations

Details for specific lessons and skills for each category are in exhibit 2 attached. FYS instructors claimed that although these topics may be covered in orientation, students do not retain the lessons. Instructors felt it would be best for everyone if these skills were taught in FYS as part of the curriculum so that all students could be ready for college courses after taking FYS. There may have to be some adjustment for courses taught in fall vs. spring semesters. The new FYS proposal form is in exhibit 3 attached.

FYS Teaching Policies

The AC would like to add some guidelines on the FYS web page:

- 1) FYS professors must be full-time faculty, which includes full-time contract faculty, new tenure-track hires, emeritus faculty (who may be part-time)

- 2) Applications for creating new FYS proposals must be submitted to the AC for approval
- 3) New FYS faculty (i.e., faculty who have not taught FYS previously) must have one year of teaching experience with evaluations to support it (submitted with application)
- 4) Scheduling of all FYS courses needs department chair approval

The AC would also like to make some policies official in writing, but not on the web page:

- 1) Although adjunct professors are not, as a rule, permitted to teach FYS courses, we recognize that, one adjunct professor has been allowed to teach FYS before the rules were absolutely clear to everyone now involved. This decision was taken at a time of dire need and since then the professor has demonstrated continuous quality as an FYS instructor. Therefore, said professor is grandfathered-in as an FYS instructor. However, now the rules are clearer and we are adhering to them strictly so this exception will no longer be made for anyone else under any circumstances.
- 2) We will begin using the student evaluation forms as a means for approving instructors to teach FYS courses. Anecdotal evidence from students and the evaluations themselves show inconsistencies in the teaching quality among our existing instructors. For our students to receive the instruction we expect from FYS the way it is designed, there must be better accountability. As such, the AC is in the process of taking the following measures:
 - Rewording some of the evaluation questions to measure opportunity to learn rather than degree of learning (which students may not be equipped to evaluate accurately)
 - Adding a question to insure that instructors leave the room while students complete evaluations
 - Adding an instruction that we expect at least two-thirds of students complete the evaluation form

A draft of the proposed new evaluation form is in exhibit 4 attached.

During the fall 2017 semester, the AC will develop an appropriate procedure for using the form to evaluate professors, provide them with constructive feedback, and offer them opportunities to develop their abilities in accordance with union by-laws (as is done within academic departments).

Proposed for AY 2017-18

- FYS Coordinator and Advisory Committee to develop FYS instructor evaluation and development procedure
- FYS Coordinator to update approved policies and outcomes online
- FYS Coordinator to organize and offer development programs for faculty in fall and spring semesters
- FYS Coordinator to launch online FYS materials sharing portal
- Hire and transition new FYS Coordinator (Director?) to take over responsibilities

Exhibit 1: Feedback from FYS Workshop

What works well

- Explain what class is for/less content
- Students learn about services available on campus
 - Take on tour
 - Have students visit them/report back to class
 - Scavenger hunt
- Teach how to do academic reading, e.g.,
 - What a seminar is
 - How to prepare for a discussion
 - How to prepare a presentation
- Peer tutoring in class (when students are at different levels)
- Back off a bit during mid-terms
 - Bring in L4L
 - Counseling Center for stress relief skills
- Schedule 1-on-1 time (incorporate into syllabus)
- Explain subset of reading in class
- Topics less predicated on prior knowledge; start where class knowledge already is
- Structured academic controversy

What does not work

- Starting with a highly-structured syllabus
- Poor balance between content and exploration
- FYS has to cover a lot of what should be covered in orientation
 - Communication: finding/writing email
 - Student lack of worldliness in general
 - Students don't do reading

Ideas for consistency across courses

- Explain the purpose FYS to students (less content)
- Introduce to services on campus
- Focus on learning skills through exploration of topic

New objectives going forward

- Make it clear (in writing): This is not your average RIC course (practical consequences of not attending/taking class)
- Expose to campus community and services
- More emphasis on basic college freshman skills
- Working in groups (i.e., not just collaborative work)

Help!

- Choosing the right topic—less prior knowledge; start where class already is
- How much do you expect students to read? See course workload calculator.
- Coordinate visits to campus services among FYS sections that meet at the same time

- Get students to attend class consistently/finish the course

Mid-term grade submission

- Consequence: Email blast from Administration
- Incentive: Reminder that grades don't have to be exact calculations, e.g.,
 - B: Good standing
 - D: In big trouble
 - F: Failing due to absence or missing assessments

Coming soon! (for faculty)

- Common portal for sharing syllabi, assignments, resources
- FYS funding for course-related expenses

Exhibit 2: Outcomes to add to FYS courses with details

Introduction to RIC computer skills

- OASIS (finding it online)
- L4L (finding it online)
- MyRIC
- Registration
- Email
- How to find information on RIC website
- Blackboard

Introduction to campus resources

- Career Center
 - Financial Aid
 - L4L/Foodbank
 - OASIS
 - Unity Center
 - Women's Center
 - User Support
 - Health Services
 - Disability Services
 - Student Success
 - Math Success
 - Security Services
- ...probably many more

Introduction to academic skills

- Critical reading
- Writing to learn
- Staying organized
- Taking notes
- Planning assignments
- Study skills

College expectations

- Academic honesty, especially plagiarism
- Classroom etiquette
- Personal responsibility
- Freedom of expression (what it means and does not)
- Ground rules and peer evaluations (when working in groups)
- Being respectful of others and their time
- Academic calendar awareness

Exhibit 3: Proposal Form for the First Year Seminar

Proposed Semester/year FYS will be offered:

Proposed Title of FYS (limit 10 words):

Name of Proposer:

Department Affiliation:

Signature of Dept. Chair:

Provide a description that will be used in various public materials targeted at incoming first years and potential RIC students (limit 50 words)

First Year Seminars should be designed to:

- Actively introduce and engage students in academic conversation
- Guide students in:
 - constructing academic questions
 - identifying authoritative resources to help address them,
 - after discovering potential answers, communicate those conclusions effectively to others
- Provide incoming students with academic role models
- Establish standards of academic behavior and collegiate expectations
- Teach skills and introduce Rhode Island College resources organically throughout the class as they become relevant
- Provide support for the transition from high school to college
- Encourage connections among the students, with faculty, with the College, and with the broader community

FYS should NOT be:

- Courses dominated almost entirely by lecture
- Online or hybrid courses (Blackboard, however, may certainly be used as a tool for student engagement)
- Introductions to a discipline or a survey of a field
- Test-based or assessed based on a few high-stakes assignments
- Assignments (papers, projects, oral presentations) undertaken without the careful and systematic guidance of the professor
- Designed specifically to assessment outcomes

Please provide an example of how your course will be especially successful in achieving these goals.

For each of the following major General Education program outcomes, identify potential projects, assignments or activities that will 1) engage students actively in the learning process and 2) teach a specified academic skill through the exploration of content.

General Education Outcome:	Assignments or Activities:
Critical and Creative Thinking*	
Written Communication*	
Research Fluency*	
Oral Communication	
Collaborative Work	
Computer skills	
Campus resources	
Academic skills	
College expectations	

*COGE has determined asterisked topics will be specifically assessed

Attach a tentative syllabus for your class. The syllabus should provide at least:

1. An initial list of major topics and subtopics to be considered in the course
2. Examples of assignments and other methods of student evaluation

Exhibit 4: New FYS course evaluation form

First Year Seminar Course Evaluation*

Semester/Year: _____ **Instructor:** _____

FYS-100 Section #: _____ **Course Title:** _____

The instructor should not be in the room when students complete this form.

Has the instructor left the room? Yes / No

For each of the following items, please circle the number that you feel best reflects your experience in the course, where:

- 5 is strongly agree
- 4 is somewhat agree
- 3 is neither agree nor disagree
- 2 is somewhat disagree
- 1 is strongly disagree

A. First Year Seminar Goals:

1. This course actively introduced and engaged you in academic conversation.	5	4	3	2	1
2. You were given opportunities to ask your own questions about the course material in this course.	5	4	3	2	1
3. You were introduced to a variety of authoritative resources for answering these questions throughout the course.	5	4	3	2	1
4. You were given regular opportunities to write and given feedback on that writing in this course.	5	4	3	2	1
5. You were given regular opportunities to speak up or talk with others in this course.	5	4	3	2	1
6. There were opportunities for active participation in this course.	5	4	3	2	1
7. The course engaged you in a variety of academic activities.	5	4	3	2	1
8. After taking this course, you have a better idea of collegiate expectations and academic behavior than you did before beginning college.	5	4	3	2	1

9. You have a sense of the many resources available to you here on campus.	5	4	3	2	1
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B. Effectiveness and Professionalism of the Professor:

10. Your professor is enthusiastic about the course material.	5	4	3	2	1
11. Your professor encourages student participation, welcomes questions and discussion pertinent to the course, and answers questions.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Your professor is clear, well organized and prepared.	5	4	3	2	1
13. Your professor makes expectations on assignments clear.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Your professor enjoys helping students and is available for consultation outside of class.	5	4	3	2	1
15. Your professor evaluates assignments fairly (for instance, writes pertinent comments, seems interested in trying to make you a better thinker and writer, makes clear how grades are determined) and promptly.	5	4	3	2	1
16. Your professor promotes an atmosphere of respect in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1

C. Overall Course Experience:

How does this course compare to your other classes?

What did you like best about the class?

What do you think might be improved?

Would you recommend this FYS class to another student? Why or why not?

*The form has been condensed to fit on two pages for the sake of space

General Education Course Enrollments Fall 2017

Category	Sections	Enrollment	Adjunct	Notes
FYS	30	587	1	
FYS Honors	3	44	0	
FYW	34	650	31	
A	55	1015	40	
H	26	723	19	
LIT	27	744	16	
M	38	1078	9	
NS	27	1441	5	Lecture and Integrated
SB	59	2099	21	
AQSR	25	879	3	Lecture and Integrated
Connections	32	853	10	
Residual C3	5	77	5	

James G. Magyar
September 25, 2017

General Education Course Enrollments Fall 2016

Category	Sections	Enrollment	Adjunct	Notes
FYS	30	599	2	
FYS Honors	4	76	0	
FYW	34	655	32	
A	57	1015	45	
H	27	806	18	
LIT	28	805	21	
M	38	1066	6	
NS	26	1402	5	Lecture and Integrated
SB	58	2227	21	
AQSR	24	851	3	Lecture and Integrated
Connections	30	822	11	
Residual C3	6	171	5	

James G. Magyar
September 6, 2016