

Aims Sub-Committee Report English Articulation June 2002

Background

In 1998, a sub-committee was formed to look at “Aims for First-Year Writing Courses” and to draft an Aims document, the first draft of which was presented to the 1998 Articulation Meeting. The sub-committee participants included Don Precosky (CNC), Al Valleau (Kwantlen), Janet Allwork (Douglas), Judy Brown and Margery Fee (UBC), David Dowling, Dee Horne and Karin Beeler (UNBC), Elizabeth Grove-White (UVIC), Maureen Shaw (BCCAT), and Mark Battersby (BCCTT). Simon Fraser, represented by Carole Gerson, was initially a member of the sub-committee but subsequently withdrew as a direct participant while remaining an interested observer. The sub-committee presented the revised document at the 1999 and 2000 Articulation Meetings. The aims presented below as part A were approved at the 2001 Articulation Meeting.

In 2001 a new sub-committee was formed, to expand the initial document to include “Aims for Six Credits of First-Year English.” The subcommittee participants include Terri Doughty (Malaspina), Gordon Fulton (UVIC), Paul Headrick (Langara), Kevin Hutchings (UNBC), Glen Lowry (Coquitlam) and Glenn Deer (UBC). The new sub-committee accepted the rationale as expressed by the original sub-committee:

- to enhance student learning through clear and explicit articulation of the skills and abilities a particular course is designed to help students develop;
- to enhance transfer among institutions;
- to enhance curricular freedom within individual institutions while recognising shared curricular expectations.

The intent of the original sub-committee and the subsequent sub-committee was not to limit or shape curricula across the province, but to recognise the conventions of discourse common to our discipline and to find, within the different audiences, styles, conventions and discourse communities that academic writing and writing about English literature serve, the commonalities that bind us.

Aims for Six Credits of First-Year English

A. Aims for First-Year Writing Courses

1. Reading

At the end of the course, a successful student should be able to

- perform university-level critical analysis of texts by identifying and evaluating controlling ideas, supporting ideas, dominant rhetorical patterns, tone, context, and features of style;
- discuss and debate texts using terminology appropriate to the discipline and context of those texts;
- paraphrase/summarise texts to reflect accurately and coherently the original's ideas, organisation, and tone.

2. Writing Process

At the end of the course, a successful student should be able to

- utilise a university-level writing process which involves prewriting, planning, multiple drafting, conferring (including giving and responding to constructive oral and written commentary), revising, and editing /proofreading with a focus on grammatically correct style;
- produce a substantial body of successful writing under time restrictions as well as out of class.

3. Content and Organisation

At the end of the course, a successful student should be able to

- develop an argument with thesis or controlling idea, using appropriate language and rhetorical patterns, and accurate, relevant, specific, and sufficient supporting material for its audience and purpose;
- write unified, coherent paragraphs, including effective introductions and conclusions, and transitions between and within paragraphs;
- write correct, clear, cohesive, and effective English

4. Style

At the end of the course, a successful student should be able to

- vary style purposefully through manipulating sentence rhythms, sentence variety, vocabulary, and figurative language;
- format the writing for its audience and purpose, using a recognised style, such as presented in the MLA Handbook.

5. Research and Documentation

At the end of the course, a successful student should be able to

- find and evaluate source material, which may include personal knowledge and interview, print and electronic media;
- integrate source material (including quotations, paraphrase, and summary) purposefully and effectively, providing suitable authority and context;
- document sources fully and ethically according to a current documentation system (for example, MLA).

B. Aims for First-Year Literature Courses

1. Reading and Analysis

At the end of the course, a successful student should be able to

- understand a range of generic conventions;
- acquire a working vocabulary of literary critical terminology;
- understand a variety of ways that texts make meaning;
- understand the relevance of contexts to literary interpretation, e. g. historical, national, cultural;
- develop appropriate interpretive skills where non-print kinds of texts are studied (e. g. film, visual, audio);
- compare and contrast themes, issues, and formal elements in a range of assigned texts.

2. Writing About Literature

At the end of the course, a successful student should be able to demonstrate those competencies listed in A2 and A3:

- utilise a university-level writing process which involves prewriting, planning, multiple drafting, conferring (including giving and responding to constructive oral and written commentary), revising, and editing/proofreading with a focus on grammatically correct style;
- produce a substantial body of successful writing under time restrictions as well as out of class;
- develop an argument with a thesis or controlling idea, using appropriate language and rhetorical patterns and accurate, relevant, specific, and sufficient supporting material for its audience and purpose;
- write unified, coherent paragraphs, including effective introductions and conclusions, and transitions between and within paragraphs;
- write correct, clear, cohesive, and effective English

In addition, a successful student, at the end of the course, should be able to

- distinguish between summary and analysis
- develop and argue, in academic essay format, a coherent reading of a literary text;
- select and integrate primary textual evidence that effectively supports the argument;
- make appropriate use of secondary sources where applicable;
- format essays using MLA guidelines;
- use inclusive language.

3. Discussion

At the end of the course, a successful student should be able to

- demonstrate an ability to discuss and analyse literature in class;
- engage respectfully with different interpretations.

4. Research Skills

At the end of the course, a successful student should be able to

- find and evaluate secondary material, which may include print and electronic media;
- integrate secondary material (including quotations, paraphrase, and summary) purposefully and effectively, providing suitable authority and context;
- document sources fully and ethically according to a current documentation system (for example, MLA).

The sub-committee recommends that this Aims document be adopted as criteria for transfer for first-year, semester-length writing courses and first-year, semester-length literature courses. In principle, this means that courses, which, in the judgement of the receiving institution, meet these agreed-upon aims, would receive one of two province-wide designations (English 1st Writing or English 1st Literature, for example). In practice, receiving institutions will continue to examine individual course outlines to designate any specific course equivalency that might be appropriate in addition to the designation already received. Course equivalency would continue to be determined largely by content similarities.