

Program Learning Goals for First-Year Writing

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First-Year Writing at MSU is a program that values **inquiry**, **discovery**, and **communication**. Discovery and inquiry are related (inquiry is a process or a method for discovery) both serve the ends of, and are enabled by, communication.

- **inquiry**: a recursive process of posing, following, and answering questions.
- **discovery**: making new knowledge through inquiry processes.
- **communication**: purposeful engagement of others through the products of inquiry and discovery.

As such, the **First-Year Writing Program at MSU** puts learners at the center of learning. Our mission is to help learners acquire the moves, strategies, and dispositions that will allow them to continue to develop as writers and producers of knowledge beyond first-year writing. This goal is realized through new understandings of production, effects, and ethics of knowledge produced through writing, and through the acquisition of new practices for its production. The First-Year Writing curriculum invites students to put their prior knowledge in relation to new understandings of rhetoric, literacy, and culture. The idea of inquiry is central to the curriculum, which moves students from reflection on experience to analysis of cultural and institutional values and discourses, to inquiry into rhetorical production. Whether or not it is named as an explicit topic in writing classes, culture is an idea that is surfaced, named, and referenced through writing and learning to write.

The following principles are foundational to our learning goals for First-Year Writing:

1. For writers, **inquiry**, **discovery**, and **communication** are related and recursive acts.
2. Learners of writing have useful prior knowledge and capacities. In fact, *experience* is central in learning to write: it is both a source of knowledge and a subject for inquiry.
3. Writers benefit from working with others.
4. The practices, values, and effects of writing are variously situated in communities and cultures.
5. Culture is important both in learning to write, and in assessing how writing works in the world.

We believe that the work of learning about writing is necessarily unfinished when First-Year Writing is completed, and that *students will leave with transferable knowledge that will deliver continued learning throughout their college careers and beyond*. The first-year writing experience at MSU does not strive to predict or replicate every possible writing task students may encounter in their educational or professional lives. Instead, it aims to develop students' capacities to understand and adapt to new writing situations. The aim of developing transferable knowledge of rhetoric and writing practices shifts the emphasis from assessing generic products of writing (e.g., "the research paper") or specific content knowledge to building and assessing capacities for continued growth and production: i.e., to evaluating student learning. The learning goals we have developed address this aim.

This rubric should allow teachers to:

- understand their job teaching this course
- communicate FYW program values
- communicate goals to students
- invite pedagogical conversations
- show the program's distinctiveness and communicate its priorities

INQUIRY		
	<i>Upon completion of a First-Year Writing course, students should KNOW the following:</i>	<i>Upon completion of a First-Year Writing course, students should be able to DO the following:</i>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That writing operates as a form and process of inquiry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use writing to direct, as well as to report, inquiry.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That inquiry continues throughout the writing process. That inquiry is an active process of assessing and reassessing goals. That <i>information</i> is subject to inquiry, and that new information participates in the inquiry process. That inquiry generates new knowledge from beginning to end. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use inquiry at each stage of the writing process. Read/view/listen to assess and reassess rhetorical purposes and strategies. Formulate research questions from both prior experience and new encounters with texts. Design inquiry processes appropriate for research goals. Reassess research questions as inquiry progresses.
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That motives for, and uses of, inquiry are situated in cultures and communities. That disciplines and professional communities function as cultures. That inquiry strategies are situated in the needs and values of cultures and communities, both academic and nonacademic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses the value and uses of knowledge products in communities. Assess the value and uses of knowledge writing in disciplinary cultures. Situate or position themselves as writers within a disciplinary conversation. Use ethical processes of inquiry to demonstrate learning of and respect for others' cultural values and practices.

DISCOVERY		
	<i>Upon completion of a First-Year Writing course, students should KNOW the following:</i>	<i>Upon completion of a First-Year Writing course, students should be able to DO the following:</i>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That writing can lead to many forms of discovery—of self, of others, of communities, of ideas—and that this discovery is ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach writing as a vehicle not only for reporting or documenting, but for discovery and rediscovery of purposes.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That writing can be goal-directed, but that the goals can change through revision. That writing in new genres, modes, or media can lead to discovery. That collaboration can lead to self-discovery. That engaging an audience can lead to new discoveries. That discovery requires (new) resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use revision to find new purposes and meanings. Situate emerging understandings in relation to encounters with texts and conversations to build new theories. Engage in purposeful collaborations. Recalibrate purposes in relation to evolving understandings of audience. Find and engage resources to lead to discovery. Approach primary and secondary sources as tools as means for discovery.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That discovery can be facilitated by interaction with primary and secondary sources. • That discovery is both enabled and produced by conversation and collaboration. • That engaging an audience can lead to new discoveries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider feedback from others to discover new purposes decisions about writing.
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That original ideas are situated in histories and traditions. • That methods of knowledge making extend established ideas. • That diverse knowledge making practices are central to developing new ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the origin of ideas in disciplines. • Think carefully and responsibly about the effects of knowledge production on readers and audience. • See the affordances and seek out rich understandings of audience. • Explore (in writing and conversation) other positions in relationship to one's own.

COMMUNICATION		
	<i>Upon completion of a First-Year Writing course, students should KNOW the following:</i>	<i>Upon completion of a First-Year Writing course, students should be able to DO the following:</i>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That writing creates new knowledge and is a form of reflection and action. • That purposes for writing direct other decisions. • That writing is an act with ethical implications. • That writing can be a form of action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach writing as a productive, purposeful, and ethical act that is contingent on scenes and (material and human) contexts. • Assess rhetorical situations in order to act within them. • Use writing to make things happen in the world.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That knowledge of rhetoric is essential for making good decisions about writing. • That writing is often goal-driven, but that goals can change in the writing process. • That decisions about language use, genre, and medium follow purpose. • That writing is responsive to an audience. • That research is motivated by rhetorical purposes. • That writing is one resource within a wider rhetorical repertoire (e.g., sound, image, body language). • That acts of communication are situated in communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply diagnostic strategies to rhetorical situations. • Evaluate resources to achieve communicative purposes. • Choose language and make writing decisions in relation to rhetorical purposes. • Adjust rhetorical purposes in response to new knowledge. • Use human and material resources to achieve communicative goals. • Discover appropriate reasons and purposes for writing from attention to context. • Communicate with other writers about goals and purposes. • Use sources to situate, elaborate, and authorize. • Use writing technologies as resources to achieve communicative purposes.

Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That writing is constrained by social, cultural, and disciplinary traditions.• That culture affects how writing prevents or enables communication.• That writers have an ethical responsibility to consider and anticipate the effects of their communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use writing in ways that are responsive to community goals and interests.• Assess cultural expectations prior to action.• Make culturally sensitive decisions about the effects of communicative acts.• Revise purposes and approaches in relation to developing cultural knowledge.• Explore one's own position from the perspective of others.• Learn from other perspectives, and incorporate these responsibly and respectfully into one's own work.• Cultivate an attitude of openness toward other perspectives, including responses to one's own productions.• Consider and anticipate the effects of their communications.
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