

ENGLISH COMPOSITION: OVERVIEW AND PHILOSOPHY

Overview

ENGL 1100 and 1120 are sequential. The writing skills students develop in ENGL 1100 are carried over to ENGL 1120 and serve as a foundation for the more difficult writing assignments students will encounter. Thus, ENGL 1100 establishes the rhetorical framework for writing in the university setting, focusing on expository writing and critical analysis of written texts. It provides students with a sound approach to writing and reading non-fiction texts and introduces students to the writing process. ENGL 1120 continues the emphasis on the writing process, giving students practice in using more complex stages. The emphasis here is on research and argumentation, culminating in the writing of a research paper.

Statement of Composition Philosophy

Learning to write and read well are complementary activities and thus parallel learning objectives. The governing assumption of a writing course is that improvement in both is possible. Thus, exposure to the rhetorical nature of writing and reading plays a significant part in a student's development as a writer. Successful learning therefore requires that students be given ample opportunities to write in an environment that is challenging but also supportive.

Writing and reading are kinds of thinking: improvement in one is connected with improvement in the other. Students therefore need to develop strong writing and reading skills, including exposure to writing and reading processes, if they are to become thoughtful writers and perceptive readers. Responsible composition pedagogy should help students learn these processes.

In a freshman writing course, the reading and writing processes students learn should prepare them for the reading and writing they can expect in other college courses. Instruction should be tailored accordingly: specifically, reading non-fiction prose and writing non-fiction essays.

Instruction in writing is also an important part of students' intellectual development and helps prepare them for participation in society beyond college. It is an essential part of students' introduction to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy. As such, writing can be construed as a private and social act. As a private act, it helps students know themselves better as writers and thinkers and become more confident in expressing themselves. As a social act, it helps students establish their presence in the world, acknowledge the presence of others, and make their thoughts known in responsible and ethical ways.