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.*

Appendix

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

Submitted by FYW Program (Becky Caouette, Director of Writing)
17 April 2017

Contents

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 <u>General Education Outcomes</u> (Written Communication; Critical and Creative Thinking; Research Fluency; and Collaborative Work). We also draw heavily on the <u>Writing Program Administrators (WPA) Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (v3.0)</u> 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 (<u>WID</u>) 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**

First Year Writing 100H

Capacity is 15

# of sections below cap: 0
# of sections at capacity: 0
# of sections over capacity: (@16): 1
                                       (@17): 1

> ➢ FYW 100H is at **110% capacity**

First Year Writing 100Plus

Capacity is 15 students

# of sections below cap: 1 (for a total of 1 open seat)
# of sections at capacity: 3
# of sections over capacity: 0

> ➢ FYW 100P is at **98.3% capacity**

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**