

Comprehensive Writing Program Sequence and English 20

ENGL20 was created in 1992 as a response to faculty and community concerns about student writing. ENGL20 was revised in 2006 at the request of the Faculty Senate to become a course focused on introducing students to writing across the curriculum and a prerequisite for the Writing Placement for Juniors (WPJ) and Writing Intensive (WI) courses. ENGL20 plays a central role in the sequence of the Comprehensive Writing Program, which moves students from an introduction to academic reading and writing (ENGL1A) to an introduction to writing across the curriculum (ENGL20) to writing in the student's major (ENGL109) to upper-division writing (Writing Intensive).

Below is a description of the courses in the Comprehensive Writing Program Sequence:

First-Year Composition: Intensive writing courses designed to help students use reading, writing, discussion, and research for discovery, intellectual curiosity, and personal academic growth - students will work in collaborative groups to share, critique, and revise their reading and writing. Students will engage in reading and writing as communal and diverse processes; read and write effectively in and beyond the university; develop a metacognitive understanding of their reading, writing, and thinking processes; and understand that everyone develops and uses multiple discourses.

Students will:

- understand the ways that readers read and writers write in and beyond the university
- understand and use processes of reading, writing, and research
- develop a metacognitive understanding of processes of reading, writing and thinking
- understand and use appropriate textual conventions
- understand and engage in reading and writing as communal processes
- think critically about academic discourse communities as contact zones where different cultures both connect and come into conflict.

Sophomore Composition--College Composition II: An advanced writing course that builds upon the critical thinking, reading, and writing processes introduced in first-year composition. This class emphasizes rhetorical awareness by exploring reading and writing within diverse academic contexts with a focus on the situational nature of the standards, values, habits, conventions, and products of composition. Students will research and analyze different disciplinary genres, purposes, and audiences with the goals of understanding how to appropriately shape their writing for different readers and demonstrating this understanding through various written products. Students will develop rhetorical knowledge and awareness of writing in the disciplines through:

- Reading texts from a variety of disciplines in a variety of genres
- Identifying appropriate context-based writing conventions
- Composing, informally and/or formally, in a variety of genres
- Developing the ability to think critically about the values and standards of various disciplines.

109W: Writing for GVAR: English 109W provides intensive practice in prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing academic writing. Students research, analyze, reflect on, and write about the kinds of writing produced in academic disciplines. Students produce a considerable amount of writing such as informal reading responses, rhetorical analyses, and an extended academic research project. Students will submit their writing late in the semester in a GVAR Portfolio, from which they will receive a GVAR Placement. Students will develop increased awareness as academic writers through preparation of a Course Portfolio. At the end of the semester, students will demonstrate an ability to succeed in upper-division Writing Intensive General Education coursework by showing that they can:

- Engage in writing as a process that includes invention, revision, and editing based on feedback from peers and instructors throughout the writing process
- Critically read and interpret texts from a variety of academic genres, media, and contexts with attention to the ways in which genre influences purpose, format, evidence, tone, conventions, and organization
- Understand specific ways in which writers in academic discourse communities purposefully contextualize their writing within the disciplinary conversations in order to participate in the production of knowledge in that discipline
- Engage in critical reading, researching, writing, and thinking processes to compose both formal and informal texts that respond critically to disciplinary knowledge-making contexts and that signal the writer's credible participation in disciplinary conversations
- Compose not only texts in which they demonstrate context-appropriate rhetorical choices, but also texts in which they explain, justify, and critically self-reflect about making context-appropriate rhetorical choices.

Writing Intensive: Courses designated as Writing Intensive build on the basic skills and knowledge acquired by students in their foundation courses in General Education or the major. These courses are to expand students' knowledge by examining complex issues and they are to advance students' abilities to reason logically and to write clearly in prose.

Arguments for retaining ENGL20 as a graduation requirement:

- In 2006 the Senate Reading and Writing Subcommittee was charged with creating a more logical sequence for the Comprehensive Writing Program. The new, writing across the curriculum- focused ENGL20 plays a critical role in that sequence. The Subcommittee spent a year creating the new Comprehensive Writing Program sequence and the past five years implementing the new sequence and doing faculty development to train composition teachers in the WAC approach.
- ENGL20 is the only course at CSUS focused on introducing students to the genres, ways of thinking, writing styles, and research methods of the various disciplines of the institution. Without ENGL20 students will lack awareness of how writing and researching differs in different disciplines (see sample writing from ENGL20 students on pages 3 and 4).
- Longitudinal research has shown that writing skills atrophy if students do not have a writing-intensive experience for an entire year of schooling, and that students who need writing courses the most will avoid them if they are not required (Beaufort, 2007; Carroll, 2002; Herrington and Curtis, 2000; Sternglass, 1997).
- ENGL20 meets two Baccalaureate Learning Goals: "Competence in the Disciplines" and "Intellectual and Practical Skills" (written communication and information literacy).
- ENGL20 is one of only three required courses in students' entire academic careers that assign 5,000 words of writing and feedback from peers and the instructor.

Quotes from ENGL20 student portfolio cover essays:

With my awareness of the rhetorical situations, rhetorical choices I can make, and the writing patterns academic discourse communities use, I know how to write in ways that address the topics while consciously considering these rhetorical factors. This awareness has been the most significant concept I have learned in any English class because not only has it helped me to complete this English 20 class...but I can use my skills learned in this class when I am asked to write in other disciplines in addition to the English discourse.

English 20 was very challenging for me because I had to learn new thinking methods to incorporate in my writing. I had to adapt to seeing writing as a rhetorical situation meaning I had to know who my audience was, what is my purpose for writing, what persona I want to establish, what and how my text looks like and explain the context I as a writer am working in the specific academic discourse community.

This course was beneficial in the terms of developing my writing to another level where I can write in any genre that does not only focus on the audience of the English community but all academic communities. As a writer, I now feel that with the knowledge that I learned through this course of the rhetorical situation, rhetorical awareness and writing to other academic discourse communities definitely impacted my writing process as a whole. At the start of English 1A, my writing process was a basic five paragraph style essay whereas now my writing process developed in a variety of forms from essays, reports and guides that applies to all types of writing communities.

During my freshman year at Sac State, I took a remedial English class. I spent that whole semester basically unlearning the 5 paragraph essay style of writing which I spent all four years of high school trying to master. You can imagine the frustration of stopping a habit. It was difficult for me to transition into college and learn a whole new style of writing. This English 20 class compares to that freshman writing experience because in this class, I actually learned different ways to think while writing which will benefit me in future writing assignments,

Excerpt from an ENGL20 student essay: “Genre & Format: A Guide for Rhetorical Awareness”

Description: How an author incorporates using an essay, a brochure, or flier to speak to his audience via the rhetorical choice he has made.

Examples: In the academic article *A Relationship between Reading and Writing: The Conversational Model*, Charles Bazerman uses the genre of an essay for his purpose of explaining The Conversational Model to his audience. As a writer, this seems like the best way to inform the audience because the author may fully explain his purpose in detail as not to confuse his audience. In the sample specific text *Effects of Unsaturated Free Fatty Acids on Adhesion and on Gene Expression of Extracellular Matrix Macromolecules in Human Osteoblast-like Cell Cultures*, Estella Musacchio Et Al. took the scientific method and turned it into a genre in order to fully explain to their audience the way they did their research in order for others to replicate it.

Rhetorical Situation Influence: Authors tend to use genres that will benefit their purpose in explaining the information they have gathered to their audience. Authors must be mindful of context and persona also, when they are deciding on the appropriate genre to use. Musacchio Et Al. were singling out other scientists and directly using a scientific persona to relate the topic of the article to their audience. The way they do this is by showing their audience, step by step how to replicate the experiment in order to get the same results.

Bazerman, as a writer of academia in the English faculty has purposefully use the essay genre in order to convey to other writers, how they should write. His purpose is to explain to his audience, in an essay, how to better write an essay. Bazerman's purpose was direct, in the fact that he wanted to better explain how a student, or amateur will writer better after he reads *The Conversational Model*. The persona of the Musacchio Et Al. article is directly related to the audience. The persona of the article speaks directly at other scientists in the field. How this is done is by the use of the scientific method that was incorporated into a genre that the authors used. By using the subtitles of *Methods, Analysis and Results*, the audience would be able to replicate the experiments and either get the same results or prove the authors wrong. Musacchio Et Al. personalized this genre to make it work with the information they had and were able to add their own persona to the formatting of the article by doing this. When Bazerman was writing *The Conversational Model*, he knew that using the essay genre would be the most beneficial to this audience because he was using a genre that would be the most familiar to them. Bazerman thought about his own rhetorical situation in the context of purpose, audience and persona. And although this article is thirty years old, it still applies to the way that authors write currently today. They still need to be aware of their rhetorical situation to become better writers is what Bazerman was implying in his essay.

Excerpt from an ENGL20 student text “Research Papers in Nursing” (from a student website about writing in nursing found at [www.csus.edu/wac/ WAC/Students/disciplines.html](http://www.csus.edu/wac/WAC/Students/disciplines.html))

Click [here](#) to view an example nursing research paper and follow along as we refer to this example paper throughout the analysis.

- Purpose (the reason for writing)
- Persona and Audience (character adopted by the author and who the essay directs at)
- Rhetorical Appeals (devices used to strengthen the purpose)

Purpose

The general purpose of writing a nursing research paper is to share with your audience your experimental findings. The purpose of sharing your results could be:

- to convince a facility to adopt a technique or system
- to inform people of current findings
- to get an A in a nursing class!

When reading a nursing research paper, one can view the purpose from different angles:

- Purpose of the experiment
- Purpose of the research paper
- Purpose of the author

In the example research paper, the purpose of the experiment is to prove whether or not “physical activity interventions implemented during and following treatment can prevent decline or improve [a variety of aspects pertaining to one's health]” (p. 578) In addition, “The purpose of this paper is to describe the study design, along with outcomes related to recruitment, retention and representativeness, and intervention participation” (p. 577) It is important to mention that research papers usually do not have an implied purpose. The significance lies in the idea of eliminating any ambiguity and to be clear and concise in order to effectively carry out the message. Although the purpose of the research paper and the experiment are often explicitly stated, the purpose of the authors could, however, be implicit. For example, throughout the research paper, the authors note this main idea: “...integration of exercise into the care of women with breast cancer” (p. 583), but never directly states that this is their purpose, although it is obvious and clear from their word choices: to convince a facility to integrate exercise into the care of women with breast cancer.

Persona and Audience

Usually, authors of nursing research papers share their findings via formal diction. Instead of simply stating various medical jargons hoping the audience will understand, it is important to write the full word or phrase followed by the abbreviation in parenthesis the first time the term is mentioned. This indicates that the word or phrase will be stated as the abbreviation from that point on. Examples from the paper include:

- “...quality of life (QoL)...” (p. 578)
- “Exercise for Health (EfH)...” (p. 578)
- “...Chronic Disease Self-Management Intervention Model (CDSM)...” (p. 579)

The use of abbreviations makes the paper less wordy and easier to follow (click [here](#) to explore other useful abbreviations commonly used in the Nursing program). You do not have to define every word you think the audience may not understand. In fact, the lack of definition to unfamiliar terms will highlight the intended audience. For example, the authors mention that the majority of the participants were diagnosed with “infiltrating ductal carcinoma” (p. 581), but did not further explain that term. This is likely to indicate that the audience should already have previous knowledge of this term, such as nurses and doctors; moreover, this would mean that the purpose is directed at these particular individuals, which attempts to persuade them to integrate exercise into the care of women with breast cancer.