

University of Massachusetts at Lowell Outcomes for First-Year Writing

These objectives were designed in consultation with the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Outcomes Statement for First-Year Writing, available at www.wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes/html.

Intensive Writing Lab (42.101SI)

Catalog description: Taken simultaneously with College Writing I, the two-credit Intensive Writing Lab offers students supplemental instruction (SI) to complement their work in that course. Students who place into the Writing Lab will receive extensive training in grammar, mechanics, and the use of Standard English. The once-per-week lab encourages students' success in College Writing I and in their other classes. *Credits for this SI count toward full-time status, but do not satisfy any part of the graduation requirement.*

The learning objectives for this course include the following:

- Students will improve their ability to control their language and ideas to produce clear, effective writing.
- Students will practice supporting and developing ideas logically and completely.
- Students will review relevant principles of grammar, mechanics, and style, and practice identifying these issues and editing them in their own writing.
- Students will explore their roles as participants in an academic community of writers.
- Students will use feedback from instructors and peers to improve their writing, and will connect with campus resources—particularly peer tutoring services—that will support their writing going forward.
- Students will exit with an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as writers, and the self-assessment tools necessary to continue on successfully in their writing careers.

Common syllabus elements and principles:

Special Drop/Withdraw Status

SIs in the FYWP are designated “drop with permission only.” Students are unable to remove themselves from the IWL. Faculty should not give permission for drops or withdrawals; refer questions about enrollment to the coordinator.

Attendance Policy

Every section shares a **mandatory** attendance policy: Missing more than two meetings of the IWL (after a student's official enrollment) will result in course failure. Please make this very clear to students.

Entrance Assessment

At the first class meeting, all students take a standardized assessment to be turned in to the FYWP. Students who score extremely well on the objective portion and whose writing samples demonstrate very good control of language may be excused from the course. Consult with the coordinator if you have a student you think should be excused.

Exit Assessment

During the last class meeting, all students take a standardized exit assessment to be turned in to the FYWP. We will also ask students to complete an IWL-specific course evaluation. Instructors are free to assign additional student or course assessments of their own design. The class is **not** scheduled for an exam during finals week.

Grading

Students receive a letter grade for the class.

Instructional Principles

Beyond the learning objectives for the course, the FWYP asserts:

- Instructors must assess and respond to the **wide range** of abilities and the variety of strengths and weaknesses represented in each group of students.

- Instructors must be alert and responsive to students' **resistance**; some students are self-conscious or defensive (and some are very surprised) about having placed into a supplemental instruction.
- Because students often take this SI as an overload, and students are already writing papers for College Writing I, instructors should **keep the homework burden to a minimum** and, instead, focus class meeting time on hands-on workshop activities.
- While it can be quite useful to have students work with assignments from their College Writing I course, IWL instructors should **take care not to interfere with the CWI** instructor's teaching.
- Instructors should make every effort to establish an **active learning environment** and to embrace universal design principles for the course, varying strategies and types of activities to address the course material. The SI tends to have a larger proportion of students with learning disabilities than a given section of College Writing I, and, even for students without LDs, the two-hour block can feel long.
- Instructors should make every effort to ensure that student work done during class sessions balances accountability and skill building. Many of us have found open-book and collaborative quizzes to be effective.
- Instructors who would like to request their sections be held in a computer lab must arrange that with the Registrar's Office by e-mailing Mai Nguyen at scheduling@uml.edu. Please note that this will not always be possible.

Recommended Text

The FYWP does not require the use of any specific textbook, but several instructors have found Lee Brandon's *At a Glance: Sentences* to be a reasonably-priced and useful resource for review of and exercises on the basics of grammar and mechanics. The Cengage rep. to UML is Jeffrey.Krum@cengage.com, (515) 554-8026.