**First-Year Writing Program Discrete Skills Master List**

While much of the First-Year Writing Program’s curriculum is conceptual in nature, there are many technical components to writing that students need to create a functional and effective piece of writing. This list is meant to capture discrete skills that faculty will work on with students as part of reading and writing assignments for their courses; the chart also gives faculty an idea of which courses in the program’s sequence take the greatest responsibility for teaching these skills. Discrete skills are tangible skills that have a clear beginning and a clear end--they can be taught/addressed in a single lesson. Once acquired, the skill can be applied and reused in different contexts throughout the semester, though mastery, of course, is developed over time.

Each course will introduce, emphasize, or reinforce a skill. Because not all students take Foundations for College Writing, Intensive/College Composition I might be their first encounter; therefore, the “introduction” will likely happen in whichever is the student’s first college writing course.

**Introduced** - Refers to skills that are being presented to students for the first time in the FYWP. We can assume that students have little or no prior knowledge of them. The expectation is that students be exposed to the skill and understand its fundamentals, but proficiency with the skill is not required at this level.

**Emphasized** - These skills may not be new to students; likely, the students have been introduced to them either in the FYWP or in previous educational experiences. A fair amount of attention is paid to them, either in the instructor’s initial presentation of them, or in repeated references in class activities, feedback on papers, and student revisions. The expectation is that students gain a firm understanding of the skill and associated concepts.

**Reinforced** - Refers to skills that have been the focus of previous classes. It can be assumed that students have previously spent a sizable amount of time and effort focusing on them,

and in general understand the concept. Therefore, the focus here is on improving and refining their use of the skill and/or reminding students to employ it via individual feedback on their work. The expectation is that students have some fluency in the skill and are able to apply it to the various assignments that the course requires them to complete.

**Critical Reading**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |  Foundations | ICCI/CCI  | CCII  |
| Annotating a text | Emphasized  | Emphasized  | Reinforced  |
| Paraphrasing and summary | Emphasized | Emphasized  | Reinforced  |

**Sentence Level**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |  Foundations | ICCI/CCI  | CCII  |
| Using effective sentence structure and other grammatical concerns[[1]](#footnote-1) | Reinforced  | Reinforced  | Reinforced  |

**Paragraph Structure and Development**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |  Foundations | ICCI/CCI  | CCII  |
| Understanding the importance of topic sentences in effective paragraph writing. | Emphasized  | Emphasized  | Reinforced  |
| Developing the topic of a paragraph (Point, Illustration, Explanation)  | Emphasized  | Emphasized  | Reinforced  |

**Connecting Ideas and Paragraphs**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Foundations  | ICCI/CCI  | CCII  |
| Correctly using transitions to connect paragraphs.  | Introduced  | Emphasized  | Reinforced  |
| Repeating key terms, pointing words, etc.  |  Introduced | Introduced/Emphasized | Reinforced  |

**Introductions/Conclusions**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |  Foundations | ICCI/CCI  | CCII  |
| Effectively using introductions  |  Introduced | Emphasized  | Emphasized  |
| Effectively using conclusions |  Introduced | Emphasized |  Reinforced |
| Understanding the difference between the topic and the thesis of an essay. | Emphasized | Emphasized | Reinforced |
| Creating a central claim or question (i.e. purpose statement, thesis, research question, etc.) | Introduced | Emphasized | Emphasized |

**Sources**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |  Foundations | ICCI/CCI  | CCII  |
| Effectively introducing quoted/summarized material (signal phrases, identification sentence, etc.) | Introduced  | Introduced/Emphasized | Emphasized  |
| Integrating quoted material (quotation sandwich--introduce, give quotation, explain) | Introduced/Emphasized | Introduced/Emphasized |  Reinforced  |
| Correct use of APA style citation format | Introduced (basic) | Introduced | Emphasized |

**Research/Information Literacy**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |  Foundations | ICCI/CCI  | CCII  |
| Defining Information Literacy |  | Introduced  | Emphasized  |
| How to obtain background information on the author and article itself | Introduced  | Introduced  | Emphasized  |
| Evaluating sources | Introduced | Introduced | Emphasized |

**Engaging with Others**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Foundations | ICCI/CCI | CCII |
| Synthesis | Introduced | Introduced | Emphasized |
| Anticipating objections |  | Introduced | Emphasized |
| Making concessions |  | Introduced | Emphasized |

1. Each student has differing knowledge on sentence issues, so teaching these skills on a class level is sometimes difficult. Therefore, these skills should be reinforced based upon the needs of students in your classes. However, they should not be the primary focus of instruction in composition classes at this level. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)