

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

In order to earn WI credit a student must be able to organize a short paper which articulates and develops an argument. The prose should be grammatically correct, the diction appropriate to the audience and topic, and the sentences well-structured and clear.

ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE

A student who earns WI credit has demonstrated his or her ability to write fluent, clear and logical short papers, marshaling the necessary information to respond to a well-structured and clearly explained assignment. The student is able to present this information to an educated audience, simultaneously conveying the student's viewpoint on the topic.

A student who earns WI credit has learned to formulate, develop, and summarize a thesis. In the thesis statement the student indicates the direction of the paper and then develops this thesis with supporting illustrations and arguments. The conclusion creates an effective sense of closure which does not simply repeat the thesis.

GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS

Students who earn WI credit have demonstrated their ability to proofread their papers, and to spell and punctuate properly. Many students, however, continue to have difficulty with these three skills. Every professor, therefore, needs to stress these skills constantly and to offer assistance and encouragement when needed.

Among the common grammatical problems a successful WI student is expected to avoid are fragments, run-on sentences, dangling modifiers, lack of agreement, inconsistent use of tenses, vague pronoun reference, and errors in common usage.

DICTION AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE

WI courses help students to improve their diction and use fairly sophisticated sentence structure. A WI student learns to choose appropriate words for the assigned audience and topic. In order to be competent writers, students also learn to subordinate their ideas properly through the use of both simple and complex sentences. Sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structure develop over time as the student reads more widely.

Students who receive WI credit are not always accomplished writers. WI credit certifies only that they can organize and give expression to a relatively limited body of data in a particular discipline and express a clear opinion about the subject matter. A few students' writing will be outstanding and need little attention from their other professors. Many students, however, will need constant assistance throughout their college career in developing and formulating their ideas, especially as the subject matter of upper-division courses becomes more difficult and assignments demand more sophisticated kinds of analyses. Every teacher in a liberal arts college has a responsibility to develop his or her students' ability to think critically and to write clearly.