

ICAP Foundational Outcomes Assessment

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1. Introduction

This report is the first of two deliverables that Introductory Composition at Purdue (ICAP) will provide to support the Foundational Outcomes Assessment for the Undergraduate Core Curriculum (UCC). We contextualize this assessment, describe ongoing work, and share ICAP's current course outcomes and their connections to the UCC Foundational Outcomes. Sample syllabi, ICAP policies, and future directions are also provided.

We will follow up with a second report which provides the remaining information requested:

1. De-identified samples of student work from English 106 and 108, representing a variety of levels of quality, and showing instructor feedback;
2. Distributions of grades corresponding to sections from which the student work is drawn;
3. The assessment plan we are currently finalizing.

We welcome questions, comments, or requests for further information. Correspondence to Bradley Dilger: dilger@purdue.edu, 765-494-3730.

2. About ICAP, English 106, and English 108

ICAP is a writing program in the Department of English. We provide several versions of English 10600 and English 10800, all satisfying both written communication and information literacy outcomes.

Mainstream courses

English 10600, First-Year Composition: Mainstream course targeting general population. Four credit, meeting four hours a week (two recitation, one computer lab, one writing conference).

English 10800, Accelerated First-Year Composition: Accelerated course for students with writing experience, self-efficacy, and/or self-regulation supporting less student-instructor contact. Three credit, meeting three hours a week (two recitation, one computer lab).

Specialized versions targeting particular needs

English 10600-I: Designed for the needs of second language writers, many international students. Highly individualized, with extensive student-instructor contact.

English 10600-Y: Online, asynchronous version of English 10600. Recently developed; Fall 2019 will be start of third year offering the course.

English 10600-R and 10800-R: Learning community focused sections which integrate specialized content, genres, and/or writing processes.

English 10800-S: Includes service learning and/or community engagement.

For more detail, see the appendices, especially the self-study completed for our external review. A table of ICAP enrollments from 2014 to present is also included (Appendix A).

Staffing and governance

In the past, ICAP was staffed almost exclusively by graduate students from the Department of English. As CLA has reduced the size of our graduate program and demands for other services provided by English have increased, ICAP has increasingly turned to adjuncts (LTLs). This year, CLA provided five visiting clinical instructors.

ICAP is led by a director (a tenured professor of English) and two assistant directors (one a continuing lecturer, one an annually selected graduate assistant). Policies and strategic direction are guided by the Introductory Writing Committee (IWC). IWC is composed of the director of ICAP, assistant directors, assessment research coordinator, a Writing Lab representative, the English 106-I director, and two members elected by the English graduate student organization (GradSEA).

3. Recent Assessment Efforts

In AY2014–15, then-director Dr. Jennifer Bay, in cooperation with the Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE), conducted an extensive IRB-approved assessment of ICAP using multiple measurements (See Appendix B, especially its executive summary). This assessment project targeted both assessment of student learning and program administration and design. Participating instructors, who volunteered, provided student projects and/or papers for the assessment, participated in an instructor focus group, rated projects and papers, and incorporated a timed writing assignment into their courses. English 106 students and instructor mentors also participated in focus groups to provide further data about our courses and our mentoring efforts.

The results of this assessment effort have resulted in the following changes implemented in AY2015–16:

1. ICAP enrolled in the IMPACT program. With this further assistance from CIE, outcomes were revised to be more challenging and measurable, while preserving the influence of the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition, well-regarded best practices for first-year writing authored by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), a national professional organization.
2. A syllabus review process was created to increase consistency amongst ICAP courses, improve ability to meet outcomes, facilitate assessment, and improve professional development.
3. Student participation was limited to 10% of a student's final grade, and standards for quantifying participation grades were strengthened.
4. Mentoring programs were revised to guarantee new instructors would teach using a mentor-provided syllabus in their first year.
5. ICAP established a list of approved textbooks and processes for instructor-led pilots and centrally administered annual review.

These changes were made in a manner which balanced increased attention to course outcomes, improving consistency, and instructor autonomy— a challenge given that our diverse workforce comes from all

areas of English studies (literature, theory, and cultural studies; creative writing; rhetoric & composition; second language studies, etc).

External review by professional association board

In August 2016, Dr. Bradley Dilger took over as the director of ICAP, knowing that the assessment work Dr. Bay initiated would need to continue. A key component of this work emerged when Dean David Reingold requested an external review of ICAP. CLA, English, and ICAP agreed that the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Consultant-Evaluator Service (CES) would conduct the review. The CWPA provides this service as a means to assess and improve programs for many purposes. In the detailed self-study required by the CWPA (Appendix C), we detailed our previous assessment effort (mentioned above), and noted we did not have a long-term assessment plan in place at the time.

The external review (Appendix D) was largely favorable. CWPA consultants provided 11 recommendations, including one explicitly targeting assessment, which suggested:

- Develop a long-term assessment plan that would continue to increase coherency and consistency within the program;
- As a key facet of this drive for consistency, develop an assignment common to all sections of all ICAP courses;
- Include measures in assessment which seek direct input from Purdue students regarding writing instruction.

We largely agreed with CWPA CES recommendations, as noted in our response memo (Appendix E).

With report recommendations in mind, Dilger created a new research assistantship position, the Assessment Research Coordinator, in Spring 2018. Implementation of CWPA recommendations began with a common assignment pilot that began with six assignments suggested by instructors: a literature review, a portfolio, an information literacy pretest and posttest, rhetorical analysis pretest and posttest, professional email, and reading annotations. These assignments were piloted in Spring 2018 and were assessed in Summer 2018 by a pool of instructors compensated with funds which remained from the IMPACT enrollment. Results showed statistically significant improvement in student writing, provided direction for future work, and helped ensure instructor buy-in and engagement—given our assertion that building a program culture which values assessment is as important as measuring successes and failures.

From this initial assessment, the common assignments were narrowed to four: the professional email, a research-based essay (formerly the literature review), rhetorical analysis, and the portfolio. These four common assignments were further piloted throughout AY2018–19. At this point, we expect the portfolio will become the ICAP-wide common assignment to be implemented in Fall 2019 and beyond.

Developing an assessment plan

Currently, ICAP is finalizing a comprehensive assessment plan directed by best practices in writing studies and following CWPA review recommendations. As noted above, the common assignment will likely be implemented as a portfolio, allowing us to measure all six outcomes and students' abilities to meet these outcomes. This portfolio will include reflective components which deliver some of the data

suggested by the CWPA while helping students target several outcomes. We are currently collaborating with CIE to explore possibilities for implementation.

The comprehensive assessment plan includes other methods for addressing findings from assessment efforts. For example, we are developing a list of key rhetorical terms students will take away from ICAP courses and use throughout the rest of their writing lives. These rhetorical terms will be integrated in mentoring, delivered through the Writing Lab website, and supported by materials which help all Purdue instructors who seek to include writing in their classes speak in common terms as their students.

Finally, we will ensure that our plan answers all the recommendations of the CWPA review, especially multiple measures which support direct feedback from our most important constituency: our students.

4. Current ICAP Outcomes

The six outcomes below are used for all versions of ICAP courses. As noted above, they were developed through an IMPACT assessment led by Dr. Bay during AY2015–16. Detailed learning objectives developed for each outcome demonstrate what students can do to meet each one.

1. Demonstrate rhetorical awareness of diverse audiences, situations, and contexts.

- A. Employ purposeful shifts in voice, tone, design, medium, and/or structure to respond to rhetorical situations
- B. Identify and implement key rhetorical concepts (e.g. purpose, audience, constraints, contexts/settings, logos, ethos, pathos, kairos)
- C. Understand the concept of rhetorical situation and how shifting contexts affect expression and persuasion
- D. Understand how cultural factors affect both production and reception of ideas
- E. Match the capacities of different environments (e.g., print and digital) to varying rhetorical situations

2. Compose a variety of texts in a range of forms, equaling at least 7,500-11,500 words of polished writing (or 15,000-22,000 words, including drafts).

- A. Adapt composing processes for a variety of tasks, times, media, and purposes
- B. Understand how conventions shape and are shaped by composing practices and purposes
- C. Use invention strategies to discover, develop, and design ideas for writing
- D. Apply methods of organization, arrangement, and structure to meet audience expectations and facilitate understanding
- E. Apply coherent structures, effective styles, and grammatical and mechanical correctness to establish credibility and authority

3. Critically think about writing and rhetoric through reading, analysis, and reflection.

- A. Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to the interplay between verbal and nonverbal elements, and to how these features function for different audiences and situations

- B. Analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts
- C. Reflect on one's composing processes and rhetorical choices

4. Provide constructive feedback to others and incorporate feedback into their writing.

- A. Effectively evaluate others' writing and provide useful commentary and suggestions for revision where appropriate
- B. Use comments as a heuristic for revision
- C. Produce multiple drafts or versions of a composition to increase rhetorical effectiveness
- D. Learn and apply collaborative skills in classroom and conference settings

5. Perform research and evaluate sources to support claims.

- A. Enact rhetorical strategies (such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign) to compose in ways that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources
- B. Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias, and so on) secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and Internet sources
- C. Practice primary research methods (such as interviews, observations, surveys, focus groups, et cetera) and demonstrate awareness of ethical concerns in conducting research
- D. Successfully and consistently apply citation conventions for primary and secondary sources
- E. Explore the concepts of intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions

6. Engage multiple digital technologies to compose for different purposes.

- A. Understand writing as a technology that restructures thought
- B. Use commonplace software to create media that effectively make or support arguments
- C. Compose effective arguments that integrate words, visuals, and digital media
- D. Evaluate format and design features of different kinds of texts
- E. Demonstrate rhetorical awareness of how technologies shape composing processes and outcomes
- F. Remediate writing from one form into another with a different rhetorical context
- G. Navigate the dynamics of delivery and publishing in digital spaces

5. Written Communication Outcomes and ICAP Equivalent

The table below maps UCC written communication outcomes to ICAP course outcomes.

Written Comm. Outcome	ICAP Outcome	Rationale
Demonstrates understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses on all elements of the work.	Outcome 1	Outcome 1 purposefully addresses student awareness and understanding of audiences, situations, and contexts, which center on students' topics and assignments. This outcome asks students to effectively adapt their communication for varying contexts, audiences, and/or purposes.
Uses appropriate and relevant content to explore ideas and/or demonstrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the work.	Outcomes 2, 3, 5, and 6	Outcomes 2, 3, 5, and 6 all work toward rhetorical awareness of a topic, which requires students to utilize various forms of content, including digital genres, to effectively communicate. It is through the writing process that students are able to develop a meta-awareness of appropriate and relevant content that leads to mastery of their subject.
Demonstrates attention to and successful execution of organization, content, presentation, format and stylistic choices in writing.	Outcomes 1, 2, and 6	Outcomes 1, 2, and 6 work towards the successful execution of organization, content, presentation, format and stylistic choice including digital and multimodal spaces. Context, too, plays a large role in how students are able to demonstrate a successful execution of organization; therefore, built into these three standards are a meta-awareness of context, audience, and purpose.
Demonstrates use of credible, relevant resources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of writing.	Outcomes 1, 3, and 5	Outcomes 1, 3, and 5 address credible and relevant resources, which are based on contexts. Students will consider genre, effective forms of primary and/or secondary research, and the context to demonstrate credible, relevant sources for the context, situation, and/or audience.
Uses language that effectively communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency.	Outcomes 1, 2, 5, and 6	Outcomes 1, 2, 5, and 6 all work towards understanding the various contexts and the language needed in each context, including digital and multimodal spaces.

6. Information Literacy and ICAP Equivalent

As above, the table below maps UCC outcomes to ICAP course outcomes.

Foundational Outcome	ICAP Outcomes	Rationale
Determine the extent of information needed (define the research question, determine key concepts and types of information needed)	Outcomes 1, 3, and 5	Outcomes 1, 3, and 5 all consider the rhetorical situation—or the understanding of audience, context, purpose, etc.— in which information is needed, including defining research questions, determining concepts/topics to write about, and the types of information needed for different audiences.
Access information using effective, well-designed search strategies and relevant information sources	Outcomes 5 and 6	Outcomes 5 and 6 deal explicitly with accessing reputable research material through both physical and digital avenues, including the Library’s databases. The students’ research topics will determine the most appropriate method for research—primary and/or secondary—thus varying the effective and ethical means for accessing the information.
Evaluate information and its sources critically (analyzes assumptions and evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position)	Outcomes 3 and 5	Outcomes 3 and 5 ask students to think about writing and rhetoric, authors’ intentions, and the various rhetorical situations that surround the composition of a piece of writing. Students then use this information either to support a claim of their own or as a counterargument to their claims. In this case, students are asked to understand various source materials before they communicate this information.
Communicate, organize and synthesize information from several sources.	All ICAP Outcomes	All of our outcomes detail the writing process and are therefore used in the composing of written communication. Students are asked to consider the rhetorical situation and genres, how additional source information enhances their composition, how multiple opinions (i.e., peers, instructors) can influence the organization and direction of a piece, and how various forms of research—digital, physical, primary, and/or secondary—may further enhance their written composition.

Foundational Outcome	ICAP Outcomes	Rationale
<p>Access and use information ethically and legally (citations and references, paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution)</p>	<p>Outcomes 1, 2, 5, and 6</p>	<p>Outcomes 1, 2, 5, and 6 outline how information is used both ethically and legally within various contexts. Contextually, different situations call for different forms and uses of information; therefore, these four outcomes address this meta-awareness of context, information, and how to communicate it via writing.</p>
<p>Propose a solution/hypothesis that indicates comprehension of the problem and is sensitive to contextual factors as well as the ethical, logical, or cultural dimensions of the problem.</p>	<p>All ICAP Outcomes</p>	<p>All of the ICAP outcomes lead to this point of proposing a solution and/or hypothesis. Students throughout the process must consider the contextual factors that surround their topic, sources, and genre. This entire process is culminated in the final product.</p>
<p>Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.</p>	<p>Outcomes 1, 3, 5, and 6</p>	<p>Outcomes 1, 3, 5, and 6 all address the understanding of ethical and legal restrictions of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information. Students consider this through both physical and digital resources and through primary and secondary research methods. Again, context stipulates how students approach this information literacy standard.</p>

7. English 106/108 Syllabus Approaches

Since English 106 replaced the two-course English 101/102 sequence in AY2003–04, the course has been offered in a variety of instructor-led “syllabus approaches” that allow instructors some ability to customize the content of their courses while respecting our standardized student learning outcomes. This structure acknowledges the diversity of our instructors and offers them opportunities to teach up-to-date courses matching their research interests and abilities. English 108 courses also use syllabus approaches.

We currently have five approaches (see Appendix F for syllabus approach descriptions and Appendices G–N for sample syllabi):

1. Academic Writing & Research
2. Composing With Narrative
3. Digital Rhetorics
4. Documenting Realities
5. UR@

English 106–Y (online 106) currently uses two syllabus approaches: Academic Writing and Research and Digital Rhetorics, both well-suited to teaching online.

English 106–I, on the other hand, uses a common syllabus across all sections, given the specialized needs of second language learners.

English 106–R and 108–R sometimes use syllabus approaches to guide curriculum development, but learning community content comes first. Similarly, English 108–S instructors prioritize service learning and community engagement. These courses still participate in syllabus review and use ICAP outcomes.

Maintaining the syllabus approach structure, with separate materials and staffing required for each approach, is labor intensive, and our shrinking workforce will not support it in the future. With this in mind, ICAP is moving to a centralized theme-based system for balancing instructor interests and standardization. As we make this move, we hope to identify content and presentation that will appeal more directly to students than our current syllabus approaches. Our themes are still in development, but they include: Digital Rhetorics, Public and Cultural Rhetorics, Academic Rhetorics, Rhetorics of Science and Medicine, Rhetorics of Data Science, and Rhetorics of Narrative. Our second deliverable will provide an update on our efforts to work with the University Registrar to help students become aware of syllabus themes earlier in the registration process.

8. ICAP Policies and Assessment

In this section, ICAP policies and assessment plans are outlined to showcase our efforts to ensure our staff are well-trained in teaching writing, to balance instructor autonomy and standardization, and to ensure curriculum and program development are guided by data from student learning. As noted above, recent work is largely guided by the IMPACT assessment and recommendations from the CWPA external review.

Mentoring

During their first and second semesters of teaching for ICAP, graduate students are required to take English 505-A and English 505-B. Lecturers usually participate in one semester. This year of intensive training is only the start: all English graduate students enroll in mentoring courses every time they enter a new area of teaching or tutoring (e.g. professional writing, the Writing Lab).

Currently, our two mentors for these courses include Professor Irwin Weiser, who uses the Academic Writing and Research approach, and continuing lecturer and ICAP Assistant Director Linda Haynes, who uses the Digital Rhetorics approach. These two courses provide mentoring opportunities that guide graduate student instructors in developing syllabi, implementing course policies, grading criteria, and constructively and transparently engaging with students (see Appendix O for course syllabi). As noted above, all graduate instructors in each mentor group use the same syllabus, facilitating conversation and allowing them to develop their classroom skills and ability to provide feedback on students' writing—a hallmark of ICAP courses.

Each mentor is supported by an assistant mentor, also a graduate assistant, and the ICAP technology mentors. The assistant mentors help Dr. Weiser and Ms. Haynes with classroom content, observe and mentor new instructors, and provide a valuable graduate student perspective. They also assist with the development of classroom policies, procedures, and assignments. The technology mentors help each mentoring class integrate media- and network- intensive writing into instruction by demonstrating how writing technologies can best be used in English 106 classes. For example, they support the use of social media, teach strategies for digital design, and highlight useful resources across Purdue. Assistant mentors and technology mentors also provide graduate instructors with the opportunity to talk one-on-one during office hours. This peer-to-peer mentoring helps graduate instructors feel comfortable discussing pedagogy or concerns in our classrooms, and provides extremely important professional development opportunities for our graduate students.

In the mentoring sequence, instructors learn about writing pedagogy and practices, develop sample assignment sheets that meet ICAP outcomes, and become acquainted with Purdue policies and resources which support teaching. Instructors meet weekly with technology mentors to prepare them to use various digital technologies and teach digital writing. Classroom observations by mentors and assistant mentors provide new instructors with the opportunity to meet with faculty and other graduate students to discuss pedagogy and their classroom practices. By the end of mentoring, graduate instructors are familiarized with best practices, composition theory, and writing pedagogy, enabling them to create and sustain their own courses in year two and beyond.

Consistently strong scores from student evaluation of teaching point to the success of these efforts. For example, for AY2017–18, median scores for “Overall, I would rate this course as...,” were 4.2 across all sections; for “Overall, I would rate this instructor as...” the score was 4.6.

Syllabus Review

The syllabus review process helps maintain consistency in policies and common assignments across all English 106/108 sections. As noted above, syllabus review was developed through our AY2014–15

assessment and IMPACT-guided outcome revision, and has evolved since Dr. Dilger stepped into the ICAP director position.

Prior to every semester, ICAP staff and a team of ICAP instructors review every English 106 and 108 syllabus to ensure they follow current ICAP and Purdue policies regarding teaching, support our assessment efforts, and are generally consistent with best practices for teaching writing. Our process for review has evolved since implementation, guided by instructor input—another way we encourage broad buy-in of this work.

Before review, ICAP provides a checklist based on our instructor manual (Appendix P) and integrating the Purdue syllabus letter. A syllabus template offers cut-and-pasteable language instructors can use if they please. Syllabi are reviewed and major or minor revisions requested as needed. Those with minor revisions needed resubmit their final syllabi to the ICAP team for our archives, but are not reviewed a second time. Those with major revisions needed, on the other hand, will be reviewed a second time by the ICAP staff. (See Appendix Q for a sample.) Any instructors who need further guidance meet directly with ICAP staff to help align their syllabus with policies and assessment needs.

Feedback Requirements

Unfortunately, the written communication outcomes do not acknowledge the critical role feedback plays in writing—one increasing given that writing is becoming more collaborative and more media-intensive. Because writing is a social process, feedback is essential to how students grow and think in their current and future work.

All ICAP courses prioritize teaching how to engage with peer and instructor feedback, and all ICAP instructors provide extensive feedback on student writing followed by opportunities for revision. With feedback, students are expected to work with varying perspectives and audiences to make sure their messages are composed effectively, while at the same guaranteeing students learn to make rhetorical choices on their own. These feedback opportunities also provide instructors with the ability to formatively assess their students' work, which helps develop the metacognition writers need. The value of feedback is emphasized in ICAP by multiple means:

- *Small class sizes:* Course caps of 20 students (15 for English 10600–I) facilitate multiple opportunities for feedback by offering instructors more time for every student.
- *Policy:* ICAP staff remind instructors of University policies requiring graded feedback in weeks 5, 6, and 7, and syllabus review helps enforce this requirement.
- *Assignment scaffolding and /sequencing:* ICAP courses include assignments that are scaffolded and help students work towards incorporating feedback from both instructors and peers over time. That is, students submit and revise drafts—as is the case in any real-world writing situation.
- *Conferences:* ICAP students have the opportunity to meet with instructors and peers in small group or one-on-one settings. Conferences help students work through various writing concerns with direct input, supporting instruction in the *use* of feedback.
- *Orientation:* New instructor orientation includes direct instruction in responding to student writing, practice giving feedback to student samples, and techniques for designing assignments which facilitate feedback.

- *Mentoring courses*: ICAP mentoring teaches diverse, research-guided methods to include feedback opportunities for their students, including peer review activities, drafting days, etc.

9. Appendices

Appendices are also available on the ICAP website: <https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/icap/>

Appendix A: Table of ICAP Enrollments, 2014–present

Appendix B: 2014–2015 ICAP Assessment Report

Appendix C: CWPA Self-Study Report (December 2016)

Appendix D: CWPA Review of ICAP (March 2017)

Appendix E: ICAP Response to CWPA Report (March 2017)

Appendix F: Syllabus Approach Descriptions

Appendix G: Mainstream English 106 Syllabus

Appendix H: Mainstream English 106 Syllabus

Appendix I: English 108 Syllabus

Appendix J: English 108 Syllabus

Appendix K: English 106-I Syllabus

Appendix L: English 106-Y Academic Writing and Research Syllabus

Appendix M: English 106-Y Digital Rhetorics Syllabus

Appendix N: English 108-S Syllabus

Appendix O: Combined Mentor Syllabi (English 505)

Appendix P: Syllabus Review Checklist

Appendix Q: Sample Syllabus Review