

Writing Outcomes in the New FHSU CORE Program

Reasoning and writing are something we want all our students to be able to do well. And it's done best when our students are reasoning and writing about what they care most about—that is, what they're studying in their majors.

To that end, the current draft of the FHSU CORE implementation policy asks that students fulfill three writing and reasoning outcomes in a single course within each student's major program. This course ideally will be offered at the junior or senior level.

Here are the three outcomes:

- Write a *persuasive essay* that includes the following: a clear and debatable thesis, fully developed and supported ideas, clear organizational structure, effective consideration of opposing arguments, use of credible sources, appropriate documentation of sources, consideration of a target audience, and conventional grammar and mechanics. (outcome 1.1A.1)
- Produce a *discipline-specific document* judged proficient according to a department-approved rubric in the student's major. (outcome 1.1A.2)
- Produce a written document on a difficult question involving the disciplinary content of the student's major that subjects the student's reasoning to *sustained, intelligent criticism* according to the standards of that discipline. (outcome 1.5.3)

These outcomes could be met within an existing course within a major program, or departments might develop a new course expressly for this purpose. Moreover, the three outcomes could be met in three different assignments, or two, or even one (a discipline-specific persuasive essay that subjects the student's reasoning to sustained, intelligent criticism). Those decisions will be made at the program level.

Having these outcomes met within a student's program of study is ideal since the second and third outcomes listed above are best handled by professors familiar with the conventions and content of a given discipline. If a major program does not designate a course to fulfill the three outcomes, however, the students in that program will instead take a 3-hour UNIV "upper-level writing" course in addition to the courses required by their major program.

These three outcomes provide the university a meaningful opportunity to bring into better focus the ways we teach writing and reasoning.