

WEC Principles and Themes

The Writing-Enriched Curriculum approach is often underpinned by a number of principles which guide work on the ground between discipline and writing experts, and help to form a bridge between values and action.

WEC principles vary in terms of their inflection between institutional settings, but there are usually three prevailing themes.

WEC PRINCIPLES

- ✓ The development of writing should be integrated into the discipline and seen as an incremental process.
- ✓ Disciplinary colleagues are teachers and expert writers in their discipline and thus well-placed to articulate their assumptions and expectations around student writing, and to support students' development as writers within a discipline.
- ✓ Collaboration between disciplinary experts and writing experts is essential in a WEC programme.



Institutions may choose to elaborate on these themes by amplifying particular aspects in order to ensure context sensitivity.

'the primary role of academic staff'

The University of Oklahoma emphasises the primary role of academic staff in terms of integrating writing: 'Methods for integrating writing into curricula must therefore be developed by core faculty - they cannot be imposed by administrative fiat or outsourced to an exterior unit'.

'discipline-specific thinking and communicating'

Institutions may choose to draw attention to the impact of adopting a WEC approach, as does the University of Mississippi, observing that 'Writing teaches discipline-specific ways of thinking and communicating that are important to performance in university courses and in post-university professions'.





‘writing as multimodal’

Institutions may also decide to add to the ideas captured in the three aforementioned themes in order to better guide their WEC work. In this regard University of Minnesota notes as one of its principles that ‘Writing can be flexibly defined as an articulation of thinking, an act of choosing among an array of modes or forms, only some of which involve words’. California State University San Bernardino also highlights the variation in modes including in their principle ‘Writing today draws on a number of different modes or forms, including both graphic-heavy and nonvisual modes’.



‘expanded definition of writing’

Hobart and William Smith (HWS) Colleges have a yet more expansive understanding of ‘writing’ noting that their WEC model ‘allows "writing" to be defined quite broadly, since writing plans may also include digital competencies, information literacy skills, research techniques, oral communication, visual literacy, critical reading, critical thinking skills, and other key characteristics’.

While there are certainly shared threads across how WEC is enacted, equally the approach allows for context-specific application making it flexible enough to be used in a range of different settings.



References

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