

MEMO

Circular E7 -01

October 5, 2000

Passed By IU East Faculty Senate

November 7, 2000

To: Curriculum Committee Chair, Lora Baldwin

From: HFA Division

Re: Elective credit for Preparatory English

HFA seeks approval for offering an elective credit course requirement for students who need to take a preparatory English class before our required writing course, Elementary Composition I, W131, but who do not need a remedial course.

The Proposal

Students who place into the middle range on our placement testing system will be placed into English W130, Principles of Composition (graded elective credit course). The Principles of Composition course more accurately fits our curriculum program and better meets the needs of our students.

Background

Currently, just under $\frac{1}{2}$ our students need a preparatory course before beginning W131. However, only about $\frac{1}{4}$ of these students are truly remedial, requiring extensive preparation for English W131. The remaining students, about $\frac{3}{4}$, need a brush up or preparation course for English W131 (these are students who may be returning to college after a time or who may not have had a writing course in high school). We would like to meet the needs of those $\frac{3}{4}$ of students who need additional writing experience, but are not truly remedial students.

Course Description

W 130 is taken from the IU master course list. W130 is a college level writing course that offers students the opportunity to write more papers, work on editing, and develop writing skills over the course of two semesters by taking W130 in the fall and W131 in spring. Fort Wayne and IUN currently offer the course. The IUN description serves as the basis for our own description.

W130, Principles of Composition (3 cr.)

Placement according to the English Placement Test. For students with certain writing problems who need a semester of intensive writing experience before beginning W131. Practice in writing papers for a variety of purposes and audiences. Attention to revision and to sentence and paragraph structure. W130 does not count toward distribution requirements. Students must receive a passing grade in W130 to go on to W131.

Proposed Pilot Placement Structure

Score Range	Course Placement	Credits
Low Range	English W001	none
Middle Range	English W130	3 elective credits
High Range	English W131	3 credits

Placement Cut Scores

Cut scores for the Compass placement test in writing are established through the HFA division. Students receive a message and score between 0-100. The current scores are set based on performance statistics and research on cut scores across a range of institutions using the Compass placement test system. Below are the current and proposed cut scores with placement message:

Current—For Spring, 2001

70-100, W131 (Elem. Comp.)
Your score indicates that your writing level is sufficient for placement into English W131.

31-69, W031 (Pre-comp.). Your writing score indicates that you need to complete W031 in order to prepare for W131. Successful completion of W031 is required.

0-30, W031 (Pre-comp.) Your writing score indicates that you need to complete W031 to prepare you for W131. Successful completion of W031 is required.

Proposed Revision—Beginning Summer, 2001

70-100, W131 (Elem. Comp.)
Your score indicates that your writing level is sufficient for placement into English W131.

31-69, W130 (Princ. Of Comp). Your writing score indicates that you need to complete W130 in order to prepare for W131. Successful Completion of W130 is required.

0-30, W001 (Fund. Of English) Your writing score indicates that you need to complete W001 and W130 to prepare you for W131. Successful completion of W001 and W130 is required.

Please note:

- The middle range of 31-69 indicates students who need a preparatory course. These students are not remedial level writers.
- Fundamentals of English, introduced in Fall of 2000, will continue to be offered to meet the needs of students with substantial preparatory needs. This course, developed last spring, is being taught currently.

Reasons for Change

Our reasons for making the change in the preparatory English sequence within the IUE writing program include:

- our composition instructors report that many of the ½ of students placing into W031 could achieve more in a more challenging course—students are missing experience rather than ability that are not addressed in the W131 course,
- results on other Indiana University campuses reveal that students taking 100 level courses for letter grades are more likely to persist in college, and
- students taking an elective rather than pass/fail course are more likely to view themselves as “college” students (W031 is a s/f course—students complain about not receiving credit for what is in practice a college-level preparatory course).

Other Institutions

The elective course option structure is modeled after the highly successful Stretch Program at Arizona State University. Similar programs are being adopted in other colleges and universities and are meeting with success in higher retention rates and better grades in subsequent courses that require writing.

Writing Courses Available from Master List

Pre First-Year Writing Courses in IU System

- W001—Fundamentals of English
- W030—Developmental English
- W031—Pre-composition
- W100—Developmental Comp
- W101—Critical Literacy
- W115—Basic English Comp I (non native speaker course)
- W116—Basic English Comp II (non native)
- W117—Basic English Comp III (non native)
- W130—Principles of Comp

Current Pre First-Year Writing Program Structures

Other IU Systems

A. Fort Wayne

- W115
- W116
- W130

B. Northwest

- W031
- W130

C. South Bend

- W030
- W031

D. Columbus

- W001

E. Southeast

- W030
- W100

F. Kokomo

- W031

G. IUPUI

- W001

H. Bloomington

- W101