Learning Outcomes for 145

Illinois State University Writing Program
www.isuwriting.com
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The Illinois State University Writing Program has developed these Learning Outcomes to explain to students what you can expect to learn when you take ENG 145 (included 145.13 and 245.12) at Illinois State. Each ENG 145 class is unique, because each ENG 145 instructor designs his or her course individually (with input from the Writing Program); however, all of our instructors match up their courses to these Learning Outcomes, so you will encounter a similar list of terms and concepts as you work your way through the projects in the course.

The list below outlines the key activities, skills, and knowledge that you can gain in the course, but that doesn't mean that this list of outcomes covers everything you'll learn as a student in ENG 145. In addition, 145.13, because it focuses specifically on genres common to academic writing in the College of Business and in workplace business settings, will apply their learning outcomes in more focused ways.

Program Assessment

In addition to the assessment of your work in your specific class, the Writing Program regularly engages in program-wide assessments. We use a whole range of different kinds of research and reviews of student work that help us to better understand what students are learning, and to help us improve our teaching practices. As a student in ENG 145 during a particular semester, you may be expected to complete assessment work as part of the regular, graded work of your ENG 145 class.

ENG 145 (after ENG 101)

If you took ENG 101 with us here at ISU, you'll notice that the learning outcomes are largely the same. For students who've taken ENG 101 here at ISU, our expectations are that you will advance your skills in these areas, and specifically begin to apply them to the kinds of writing/communicating that happen in your academic discipline and potential workplace settings. For students who took a course equivalent to ENG 101 elsewhere, we'll expect you to move into our course at an advanced level, which may mean that you'll want to review some of the resources for the learning outcomes, since they won't be familiar to you.

Learning Outcome #1

Writing Research Identity: Living and Writing in the World

Short Version: Students will learn to understand and articulate how learning new skills and ideas affects their thinking and behavior as writers. Students will use knowledge gained in all of the other 7 learning outcome areas to demonstrate this ability. Additionally, in ENG 145 and ENG 145.13, students will be asked to more clearly develop and articulate their writing research identity as part of their work in academic and workplace genres in their fields of study.

What this Outcome Means

Being a successful writer in different settings requires more than just learning specific skills, like where to put a comma or how to write a thesis statement. A successful writer must be able to use their knowledge flexibly in different situations, and must also be able to determine when new skills and knowledge are required. Building a "writing research identity" means you are able to think beyond just acquiring skills and begin to understand how all of your skills (and the skills you haven't yet acquired) change what you can and can't do as a writer. For this outcome, you'll be assessed on your ability to do the following things:

• Understand and articulate what skills and knowledge you do and don't have that might be useful in a particular writing situation and within particular professional discourse communities.
• Understand and articulate skills you need to work on when you approach new writing situations within particular professional discourse communities.
• Understand generally how your knowledge about writing shapes you as a writer.
• Understand specifically how your existing knowledge (or lack of knowledge) can create limitations in your ability to engage in different kinds of writing (a key skill for becoming stronger as a writer).
• Understand how your knowledge and expertise can be adapted successfully to different writing situations.

Skills & Activities:

• You will practice identifying and assessing your own writing skills. This will include reviewing how you managed to learn the skills you already posses, as well as identifying skills you still need to learn.
• You'll work to map out how your existing and to-be-acquired skills will help you successfully engage with new kinds of writing (in the class and in your future writing life).
• You'll work to identify all of the ways you are already a writing researcher and

to better understand how your experiences have shaped you as a writer and as a researcher.

- You'll be asked to think about your attitudes about writing and about the learning you need to do in new writing situations within the student's academic discipline

The Backstory

Research in Writing Studies, Education and Literacy Studies indicates people create fairly strong "writing identities" that shape how they learn (and even what they are able to learn) about new writing situations; and the more flexible your knowledge of your writing skills is, the more likely you'll be to be able to successfully learn different kinds of writing. In our program, we try to help writers think about their identity as writers and researchers. Understanding your own experiences and the ways these experiences have shaped you can help you better understand how to use the writing research skills we offer.

Learning Outcome #2

Peer and Self-Assessment: Learning to Assess What's Working and What isn't Working

Short Version: Students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to assess their own and others' writing productions, especially in relation to writing in their discipline and professional field(s). Using skills listed in Outcomes 3-8, students should be able to provide specific and accurate evidence to document the successes and mistakes in their writing productions, and also offer this evidence-based assessment to their peers.

What this Outcome Means

Learning this skill is the way to make all the other skills you learn in ENG 145 useful. If you can't learn to use evidence from your own practice and from your genre research to assess your own productions and other people's productions, then everything you learn in each new writing setting becomes tacit (meaning you know it, but don't know how or why you know it). This is a problem, because this "tacit," invisible knowledge can be a problem when you're learning new and different kinds of writing. Tacit knowledge can keep you from learning necessary new skills, and can even cause you to use skills that are inappropriate in a new setting. So for writers working in lots of different kinds of writing settings and genres, like those found in many disciplines, tacit = unsuccessful. Therefore, in order for you to be a successful 145 student, we'll expect you to be able to do the

following:
- Complete evidence-based self-assessments of your learning (you should be able to explain what you learned and how, and also be able to identify the specific ways you used your knowledge in your productions).
- Complete evidence-based self-assessments of your own productions. We don't expect students to be able to create perfect versions of all the texts they produce in ENG We do, however, expect all students to be able to assess the texts they produce, using the skills they've learned in the class.
- Complete peer-assessments that demonstrate your ability to do genre research and activity theory analysis, and use these skills to assess a production.

Skills & Activities:
- You will engage in both peer and self-assessments throughout the semester, and you'll discuss how these activities shape your understanding of what you've learned and what you know.
- Your ability to accurately assess your strengths and weaknesses (both in your work as a writer and in your genre productions) will be an important component of the grade you receive in the course.

The Backstory
Research has long shown that learning to self assess and peer assess writing can help writers become more proficient. In our program, we've also learned that the ability to self-assess our own productions using writing research skills is one of the best ways make these writing research skills routine. While some of the writing we do every day doesn't need our conscious application of these skills, making these skills part of our regular thinking can make them more accessible when we need them, even, sometimes, unconsciously. We use self-assessment as a way to remind ourselves of what we're learning, and we also use this kind of assessment in a practical way, to test whether our ability to evaluate our writing is accurate enough to be useful as we learn to write in new genres and new writing situations.

Learning Outcome #3
All About Genres: Exploring, Researching and Analyzing Genres
Short Version: Students should be able to identify key features of genres, use specific techniques for studying and analyzing genres (genre studies and cultural-historical activity theory – CHAT), and produce texts with clear explanations of how genre conventions have been adhered to, modified, or even resisted in a particular production.

What this Outcome Means:

- By the end of the semester, we'll expect you to be able to identify key features of genres (using genre studies and cultural-historical activity theory techniques).
- We'll expect you to understand the techniques of genre research, and how such research might apply to practical work to create a genre you haven't composed before, especially genres related to your academic discipline.
- We'll expect you to be able to complete genre research for a genre you want to compose, and then discuss clearly the choices you've made as you composed.

Skills & Activities

In your time in ENG 145, you will hear the word "genre" often, because it's related to many activities in the course:

- You'll study a range of different genres, including academic and workplace You won't necessarily produce all the different kinds of genres you study, but you'll learn to use methods for studying genres that can help you to learn how to compose different kinds of writing as you encounter them.
- You'll do genre research. Genre research means to deliberately study a genre (or genres) to fully understand all of the important aspects of how/why a text is produced in a certain way in certain settings, and over time in different settings.
- You'll apply these techniques in practical ways to do a range of different writing. This work won't just be to produce the genres themselves. You'll need to be able to show that you've learned to use the research techniques and that you can identify how you arrived at the decisions you made about the production, and how the result does (and doesn't) match up with your goals.

The Backstory

Our program uses the study of genres as a key part of our learning. This means we don't agree with the idea that "writing" is something you can teach (or learn) by writing just one kind of text (like school essays, for example). Instead, we focus on looking at all the different kinds of texts that are produced, and at how a specific writer's skills need to change and adapt to meet these diverse writing needs. When we talk about a writing research identity, we mean learning to employ these techniques in practical ways can change the kind of writer you are. If you can build a strong writing research identity (through learning these techniques and practicing them), you can prepare yourself to improve your writing in different situations, especially those related to your academic discipline over time. This doesn't mean you'll always choose to conform to the "rules" of writing a particular kind of text; it means you'll learn to understand and evaluate what the conventions of a

particular genre in a particular setting are, and to analyze choices you might make to conform to, expand on, resist, or disrupt these conventions.

Researching your Content: How to find and evaluation information and cite what you Know

Short Version: Students should be able to identify effective information seeking behaviors for a range of research situations, especially in relation to their disciplinary and professional field(s). These include skills for *finding information*, particularly using field-specific academic databases; *evaluating sources for validity and usefulness*, particularly in relation to discipline-and-profession specific genres; *documenting and citing sources*, especially in relation to academic standards for their field of study; and learning to research literate activities in the discourse communities of their discipline and profession.

What this Outcome Means:

In our partnership with Milner Library, we've identified a range of different kinds of researching activities successful researchers need to be able to employ. You won't necessarily be able to use all of these skills with equal fluency by the end of the semester. We will, however, expect you to show your ability to navigate a range of research environments within your academic discipline with both skill and "critical engagement" (which means you need to be able to decide if/when/how different kinds of research sources can be useful). Critical engagement with research skills will include all of the following types of research activities:

• Finding Information: Can you find a range of different resources within your academic discipline using different Milner library databases and tools for web searching? Can you organize that information so as to keep track of it and quickly evaluate what you might use and what you can't use?

• Evaluating Information: This is a deeper process of looking at different kind of materials you collect when you are researching and determining if the source can be used and if it would be considered appropriate within your academic discipline.

• Documenting and Citing Resources: You'll be expected to know about the different ways writers use citation in the genres within your discipline to cite research and evidence. Academic citation will be a part of this work, and you'll also be expected to attend to how non-academic sources are cited.

Skills & Activities

We have created a full list the different types of research activities we'd like you to

be able to complete successfully as you move through ENG 145. These activities include the following areas:

• Finding Information: There are specific skills you can employ (such as learning to navigate the Milner library resources to find materials and use disciplinary databases) as you use both online and physical library resources. While each researcher develops their own patterns for doing research, we'll expect you to engage in thoughtful, thorough research and be able to document your process for thinking through where and how to find information.

• Evaluating Information: Once you find information, it's critical you be able to decide whether the information can be useful for the kind of writing you are doing. Determining the accuracy, relevance, and validity of information you've found will be a skill you'll explore, as well as learning to evaluate the appropriateness of specific information for the topics and genres you're producing within your professional field.

• Skills for Documenting and Citing Information: Once you've found information you want to use in the genres you'll be producing, you'll also be exploring how to document and cite these sources using the appropriate citation style for your academic discipline in the texts you produce.

• Working with Milner Library Tools: Milner library has created a range of resources. Throughout the semester, you'll work with these resources to help you gain both proficiency and critical-thinking skills related to research practices.

The Backstory

Our Writing Program works closely with the faculty at Milner Library to determine both the practical research skills you'll need as a student at Illinois State University, as well as the kinds of "thinking and creating" skills you'll need as a "citizen researcher" who must find and evaluate a wide range of information on a daily basis. Therefore, in ENG 145, you'll practice these skills. You will learn about the academic forms of citation particular to your academic discipline and you'll also learn how research is documented in a range of different genres and writing/communication situations.

NOTE: We use the term "citizen researcher" because people often think of the word "researcher" as belonging only to people with specialized education and/or knowledge. We believe all people engaged in literate activities can and already do engage in writing research.

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory: CHATting about Literate Activity (and Other Terms & Concepts)

Short Version: Students will be expected to demonstrate familiarity with the terms of *Cultural-Historical Activity Theory* and other important terms and concepts – this focuses on your ability to use Activity Theory and other concepts as a practical writing research tools for making decisions about new genres and writing situations.

What this Outcome Means

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory is a framework for investigating complex writing situations. Students in ENG 145 will expand their knowledge of this theory, and more importantly, they'll learn how to use activity theory and other concepts to investigate genres in real-world situations (including academic situations) used in their academic discipline. The goal of these investigations is to help the writer make and execute plans for producing texts and evaluating the resulting productions. We expect students to be able to do the following:

- To be able to use at least some of these terms accurately in your discussions about your writing research.
- To be able to use these terms as part of your writing research activity — the practical things you do as a writer to understand what to do and what to produce in particular writing situations.

Skills & Activities:

- *The Grassroots Writing Research Journal* is the best tool we have for helping you understand how CHAT works, and how it can be useful to you in a practical way as a writing researcher. As you read both the articles in the print issue of the journal and some of the archived articles in the journal (which are available online), you'll begin to see these articles illustrate how citizen writing researchers (all of us) can learn to study literate activity and make practical use of our knowledge as we live and write.
- In addition to reading *Grassroots* articles, you'll discuss these terms and concepts in class, and you'll be expected to use them to demonstrate your learning throughout the semester.
- We'll also explore other terms used by researchers and scholars in the fields of Education, Writing Studies, and Literacy Studies that can help you understand the activities and thinking people engage in when they write.

The Backstory

Our program has developed a specific list of terms that have helped us understand

how we can explore what happens when people write and when they learn to write in new ways and in specific disciplines. You'll definitely be working with all of the terms on our list, as well as others in your class. You will be using the terms to understand how writing works, and as you move into new writing experiences beyond 145, we hope understanding and using some of these terms will help you see the writing you do in new ways — ways that can help you adapt and improve your skills as you encounter the new writing required in your academic discipline and within your professional field.

Learning Outcome #6
Uptake and Antecedent Knowledge: Documenting Knowing and Learning
Short Version: Students will be expected to demonstrate specific skills related to documenting knowledge in new writing situations and explicitly reviewing what (and how) they've learned in these situations.

What this Outcome Means
Learning the terms and concepts in our program and the genre and content research skills we'll teach you will only be part of the work you do. You'll also be asked to demonstrate that you know how to keep track of what you're learning and keep track of how your knowledge is transforming and adapting to new writing situations. We'll expect you to be able to do the following:
- Articulate clearly how your existing knowledge and skills have adapted and changed over the course of a new writing experience.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the new skills you've learned when attempting to write in a new situation.
- Use your genre research skills to document how your writing productions represent both the knowledge you've gained about the genre(s) involved, and the specific adaptation of your existing skills.

Skills & Activities:
- You'll work with a wide range of what we call "uptake genres", which are texts and activities that help you document what you are learning and how that learning is being applied in the writing you are producing.
- You'll use various tools and activities to remember and document what you already know about writing and how that knowledge is transforming as you apply it in new situations.

The Backstory
It's a critical skill for you to learn how to document your antecedent knowledge

(what you've already experienced and learned) as well as what you are currently learning, and specifically how this knowledge is being applied (or not) in a new writing situation. Recent research in Writing Studies documents that the different ways people make use of their existing knowledge and adapt and use new knowledge has a large impact on how successfully they can work with new genres and writing situations. So our focus on these skills is actually one of the most important tools for a writer (you), who will absolutely encounter many new kinds of writing during the course of your writing life.

Learning Outcome #7

(Multi)media and (Multi)Modalities: The Forms, Structures, Tools and Modes of Writing

Short Version: Students will be expected to demonstrate skill at moving content between different modes and media.

What this Outcome Means

Exploring a range of genres within the student's academic discipline will give students experience with many different kinds of texts. And we'll focus on the changes that happen (both affordances and limitations) when we produce content in different modes (Visual, Aural, Tactile and Alphanumeric texts) within specific discourse communities and for particular audiences. Since texts that can be viewed online (video, images, hypertexts, etc.) are becoming ever more important ways of communication. As a result, we'll also expect you to be able to do the following:

- Work with at least one or more digital modes of production, as it relates to your academic discipline — especially visual and aural modes.
- Demonstrate that you understand how these modes can shape and impact communications within your academic discourse community (especially in comparison to producing only print-based texts).
- Use your writing research skills to clearly articulate your choices in producing texts (multimedia, multimodal texts, or print texts) within discourse communities in your discipline and for intended audiences expected by your professional field.

Skills & Activities:

- You will be given the opportunity to explore digital/visual/aural/oral genres and productions throughout the semester.
- You will be given the opportunity to produce digital/visual/aural/oral genres for at least one of the projects during the semester as it relates to your academic area of study.

The Backstory

Our program believes it's important to explore types of writing well beyond the traditional modalities of writing classes (which often involve mostly writing or typing text). We know the world is no longer made up primarily of print-based texts any more, even in school. That means writing researchers need to be able to choose among the range of possible modes of production, and choose and learn to use the tools necessary for these kinds of productions. While we can't expose all students to all the possible range of genres and productions within your academic discipline, we can (and we will) give you the chance to think beyond the print essay in ENG 145, and we'll expect you to take advantage of these opportunities to expand your knowledge.

Cultural and Ethical Impacts: Translingual and Cultural Studies Approaches to Thinking about Writing

Short Version: Students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to consider the implications of diverse cultural, linguistic, and ethical influences on the activities of textual production in a global, changing interconnected world, and to produce texts that are responsive to these issues within particular contexts.

What this Outcome Means

Even when we use genre studies and activity theory to complicate our understanding of how writing happens, we are still often restricted by our life, language and writing experiences. We can't envision or understand the texts we produce outside of our existing knowledge and experience – we have a hard time imagining how they might move around and how people with diverse language and cultural experiences might take them up. In a global ~~vast~~, changing, inter-connected world, these limitations in our understanding can damage our ability to produce effective texts of various kinds. We want your ability to consider alternate views of your productions to grow during your time in ENG 145. As a result of your experiences in the course, we'll expect you to be able to do the following:

- Examine a production you or someone else has made and consider how variations in language and culture and writing experience may have shaped how that text was produced or how it may be taken up by others.
- Apply your skills in thinking about cultural/linguistic implications to alter a production in appropriate ways.
- Compare your own experiences in writing (and how that experience has shaped your literate activity and writing research identity) with the experiences and

products of others — to define an ultimate quality of text, and to understand and explain the ways that writing experience writes itself into the literate activities of diverse individuals and groups of people.
- To respect and adapt to diverse language situations and incorporate this respect into both the ways you produce texts and the ways you take up and use the texts of others.

Skills & Activities:
- You will be given the opportunity to explore texts with approaches that account for different ethical, cultural and linguistic perspectives.
- You will be given the opportunity to examine the trajectories of texts as they move across cultural and geographical boundaries.
- You will be taught skills for mapping out the implications of textual productions as they are taken up in multiple geographical, linguistic and cultural settings.

The Backstory

Our experiences as people (and as writers) tend to build up into what we understand, consciously, as a "single-story" of how we write and how writing works. We learn to think, "this is the way it's done," which means we then don't question those practices, and it also means we learn to evaluate others based on their ability or willingness to "do it the way it should be done." The learning outcomes 1-7 are all kinds of learning that can help us deepen and complicate the stories we can tell about writing — because that complexity can make us better writers. In the case of linguistic and cultural differences in what writing looks like or the way it happens, a single-story about writing can not only be incorrect, it can work against our writing goals in some serious ways, which can be compounded when we work in global contexts, as well as making our co-existence as humans less rich and complete. Therefore, in ENG 145, we work to uncover these multiple perspectives and use them to make ethical choices about what and how to write in specific situations, for specific audiences, and within specific discourse communities.

Learning Outcome #9
Discourse Communities: The Impact of Professional Communities

Short Version: Students should demonstrate an understanding of how written, oral, and digital communication is shaped by discourse communities within the student's academic discipline and or/professional field. Exploring a range of disciplinary genres will give students experience with many different kinds of texts. Students will focus on the changes (the affordances and limitations) that

happen when they produce content in different modes for specific discourse communities.

What this Outcome Means

When we create texts in the classroom, it can be difficult to understand how these genres are used within our professional communities because students are not yet members of these communities. Even though they are acquiring the disciplinary language and learning to write in the genres of their disciplines, there are activities and tools that are not available to students who are still studying to join their respective professional communities. We want students to consider their prospective writing roles within their professional fields.

Skills & Activities:

- You will be given the opportunity to interview members of academic and workplace communities that use the genre(s) you are creating for ENG 145.
- You will examine genre(s) produced by members of your target discourse communities in order to better understand how these genres reflect the goals and values of the profession and/or discipline.

The Backstory

Research in Writing in the Disciplines indicates that as individuals move into their upper-level academic and professional lives, they need to make important (and often difficult) moves to learn new types of writing, which are sometimes very different (in subtle, difficult-to-identify) ways. As a result, ENG 145 and 145.13 is designed to help students learn writing research skills that will specifically help them as they move into the various discourse communities in their academic disciplines and professional working lives.