

Philosophy of Composition at Case

Despite its title, this document *does not* really speak for the whole Case community. Rather, it reflects the goals of college composition as a series of Composition Directors have understood them from many conversations with students, faculty, and composition scholars.

At the end of their college careers, students should be able to communicate effectively in their chosen communities (academic or otherwise). To do so, they should be constantly engaging in the following recursive processes:

1. Ask a question and/or define a problem
2. Research the question/problem
3. Communicate a response to the question/problem
4. Share the response & gather feedback from others
5. Revise the response (taking into account feedback, other resources/research, etc.)

Each of the steps is more complicated than it looks. Each step requires practice and guidance, for example:

1. Ask a question and/or define a problem – *What counts as a “good” question? What is a problem in the specific community? Will everyone in the chosen community agree that it is a legitimate question/problem?*
2. Research the question/problem – *Where will you find your sources? What counts as a “good” source? Where can varying opinions be found? Will community members value the evidence/research collected? Is the evidence external (e.g, research articles) or textual/internal (e.g., close reading/analysis/interpretation)?*
3. Communicate a response to the question/problem – *What form of communication is appropriate (oral/written)? How formal should the communication be? To whom is the communication directed? What are the speaking/writing conventions of the community to whom you are communicating?*
4. Share the response & gather feedback from others – *What questions do you ask of your audience? Whose input is most valid? What kinds of feedback are most useful, and at what stages of the writing/communicating process?*
5. Revise the response (taking into account feedback, other resources/research, etc.) – *How do you respond to varying kinds of feedback? Can/should you revise the writing/speech for a different audience? What additional research needs to be done to respond to feedback you have received? How can you anticipate (and therefore account for) differing arguments or points of view?*