**FYE Structure and Goals for**

 **Principia College General Education**

**Over-arching Goals of FYE**

* **Transition to College**: The three FYE courses arranged into a program allow students and faculty to bond into a learning community. The various topics of study, opportunities for collaboration as well as individual demonstration of insights and learning should make for an academic experience in which students become more and more comfortable with ambiguity and complex notions. Through this work students will develop an understanding of the nature of academic conversations both written and oral. Students should be learning to structure their individual activities to allow enough space for thoughtful and high-quality work in response to assigned coursework.
* **Character Education:** First-year students enrolled at Principia College should become acutely aware of Mary Kimble Morgan’s emphasis on the building of character as the fundamental goal of a Principia education. She says on page 65 of *Education at Principia,* “The main purpose is to develop character, to bring out the real child, God’s child.” Academic work must ultimately lead each student to become the best learner, thinker, communicator, and healer possible within his or her matriculation at Principia College. Teachers should challenge students to perform at their highest possible level on each assignment and activity. Students should challenge teachers to do the same. As a community of Christian Scientists, we need to help promote each other’s “growth in grace, expressed in patience, meekness, love, and good deeds.” [*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, page 4, by Mary Baker Eddy.]
* **Academic Rigor:** This academic goal is based on the principle that in order for first-year college students to make a full transition to college, the expectations and demands placed by teachers should correspond to actual college-level work. Hence, assignments and assessments of FYE courses and programs should not be diluted in any way in relationship to the best college courses. Grading should be appropriate to 100-level expectations. Students should begin to learn the qualities of thought and communication skills expected of the best college-level work. Teachers should hold students accountable for this high level of work, but, at the same time, they should help students develop the necessary study skills, reasoning skills, and communication skills to meet these standards.
* **Interdisciplinary Curriculum:** The two discipline-specific courses along with the ILC linked to them should be based on an over-arching theme that provides focus for the specific content in each discipline. Every possible attempt should be made by the two teachers to coordinate in time and space the development of each of their disciplines as it applies to this theme. Sometimes this requires focus on the ways one comes to know and solve problems within that discipline rather than on content development. Sometimes it requires deeper analysis and language-development within the discipline. Sometimes it requires giving up depth to broaden the scope of a discipline to allow inclusion from the other discipline.
* **Development of Learning Skills:** First-year students bring varying degrees of proficiency to their first semester of college in the numerous learning skills. Hence, FYE programs are encouraged to provide as much development in these skills as is appropriate to the program’s content and intent. However, there are four specific learning skills that must be emphasized in every FYE program. These are: (1) critical thinking and writing; (2) analytical reading and writing; (3) information literacy and writing; and (4) speaking skills. These skills are more fully described below.

***Learning should be transformational***. For transformation to occur learning should be:

1. **developmental** (challenging the student in ways that cause them to move toward new and more complex ways of understanding and being in the world.)
2. **reflective (**allowing students to be metacognitive; it is through thinking about how to reflect on the experience, and then reflecting on the experience itself, that one learns, makes connections, makes sense, and applies what is learned.)
3. **integrative** (active learning where students are engaged in the learning process in ways that enable them to see the relevance of what they are learning to themselves, their individual identities, their lives, and their community. It is seeing relationships which demonstrate the interconnectedness of curriculum, instruction, and real life purposes. Experiential and service learning activities help develop unselfish attitudes to enable integrative thinking and learning.)
4. **collaborative (**engaging in dialogue, learning in groups, seeking answers through cooperation, solving problems as a team, and teaching one another.)
5. **student-centered (**engaging students in the learning process in ways that allow them to give input into assignments, topics, learning activities, and making choices.)

**Over-arching Conceptual Focus of FYE**

The overarching concept of FYE is reading—understanding reading as a conceptual process. Fundamentally this involves looking at reading metacognitively. This includes reading a wide variety of texts—written, graphical, numerical, visual, societal, environmental, verbal, and non-verbal modes of expression. Students will focus on reading the chosen texts within their FYE with an emphasis on asking questions, analyzing within context, and making connections. This necessarily will require an emphasis on design and on creative modesof analysis rather than simply coverage of content.