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The *NADE Digest* publishes articles of interest for developmental education professionals including administrators, faculty, learning assistance personnel, academic counselors, and tutors who are interested in the discussion of practical issues in post-secondary developmental education. This edition includes articles based on presentations at the 2015 NADE conference in Anaheim, California. The *Digest* is published electronically twice each academic year. Articles in the *Digest* are indexed in ERIC.

NADE Digest submissions

Articles should relate to issues that inform and broaden our understanding and practice of teaching and learning in developmental education. The subject of the article may emphasize innovative approaches, best practices, how meaningful research affects teaching and learning, or techniques to enhance student performance. Review the "Call for Manuscripts" at www.nade.net for more information. Submit articles to Naomi Ludman at nadededigest.editors@gmail.com

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SOARing to New Heights with Underprepared Students

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Shelton State Community College

In 2007, the president of Shelton State Community College in Alabama announced that with more than 60% of incoming freshmen placing into developmental courses, the college had a moral and ethical obligation to provide top-quality opportunities for underprepared students. He appointed a team to investigate options for improving services and coursework for incoming underprepared students and committed to providing the funding (without reliance on grants) that would be necessary. The result was the creation of the Student Opportunities for Achievement and Resources (SOAR) Institute, a comprehensive program that includes intensive mandatory advising, comprehensive tutoring services, and changes in developmental curricula and course offerings. SOAR has resulted in higher persistence rates and higher pass rates in both developmental courses and subsequent college-level coursework, expanded tutoring, and intensive individual advising/mentoring services for developmental students.

Between 2007 and 2011, an average of 1,300 new students enroll each fall at Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Approximately 60% of first-time freshmen placed into at least one developmental writing, reading, or mathematics course. Once enrolled, students passed developmental courses at an average rate of 49% in English, 39% in reading, and 32% in mathematics from 2007-2011. Developmental courses were part of their respective academic divisions, and no comprehensive services were provided for students in developmental courses. Term-to-term persistence and overall retention were not tracked specifically for students in developmental courses. No students at the college were assigned to advisors. Little tutoring was available, tutors were not trained, and students who attended tutoring were not tracked. Collaboration between instruction and student services did not exist, and data for students in developmental courses was not monitored.

In 2011, the SOAR Institute was created. With SOAR, Student Opportunities for Achievement and Resources, the following changes have been realized through spring 2016. Intrusive advising with "navigators" for students in developmental courses has been instigated. Three thousand, nine hundred forty-four students have met with navigators for a total 14,966 one-on-one advising meetings.

- Of students who meet with a navigator, 87% enroll in classes. The national average of students placing into developmental classes who enroll is 67% (O'Banion, 2013).
- The semester-to-semester persistence rate for freshmen students working with a navigator is 72%.
- The average, fall-to-fall retention rate for students working with a navigator is 53%.
- The number of tutor sessions from fall 2011 through spring 2016 is 29,303.
- The redesign of developmental math courses in fall 2014 and creation of a math lab has resulted in 6,064 visits from students for over 3,326 hours of assistance.
- Collaboration between faculty and student support services has greatly increased. Evidence of this includes instructors communicating with navigators regarding student progress and attendance, and instructors spending time weekly in the developmental math lab to assist students.
- In spring 2016, two areas demonstrated that students in developmental courses are achieving success: 38% of graduates had taken developmental courses. The national average is 28% (Attewell, 2006). Of new Phi Theta Kappa inductees, 21% had taken developmental courses.
- Since its inception, over 92,600 student visits have been made to SOAR for assistance other than tutoring or advising, e.g., guidance in using the college's learning management system or help with technology, especially by non-traditional students. The number of visits for various services indicates that a welcoming, non-stigmatizing environment has been established.

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The History of the SOAR Institute

In 2009, the president of Shelton State, a commuter college, formed a team to study successful developmental programs and to propose a plan for the college. The team was comprised of the director of special projects, an English instructor, a mathematics instructor, a reading instructor, an advisor, a retention specialist, and the director of adult education. First, the group read *What Works: Research-Based Best Practices in Developmental Education* (Boylan, 2002). This was followed by visits to model developmental programs in the southeast and much research. The research helped the team realize that the college needed to coordinate support services for students, re-envision advising practices, and possibly redesign the instructional practices for developmental courses. Brainstorming sessions were also held to gather input from stakeholders at the college. In addition, team members attended NADE and CRLA conferences, and consulted with Dr. Hunter R. Boylan and Dr. Edward A. Morante, bringing both to campus to meet with faculty and staff to help determine needs.

In 2010, a proposal for a developmental program was approved. The plan, a hybrid of centralized and decentralized components, incorporated tutoring services for all students, intrusive advising for students in developmental classes, and instructional support for instructors of developmental courses. The plan dictated that advising and tutoring services be housed in a centralized location. Instruction of developmental courses would stay with respective academic departments. Suggestions for the name of the program were accepted from a broad range of college personnel, and Student Opportunities for Achievement and Resources (SOAR) was selected. In January of 2011, a SOAR director was named, and implementation of the plan began. The Director attended the Kellogg Institute that summer. By the fall term, the SOAR Institute was established and located at the busiest intersection in the middle of campus. The following principles of the SOAR Institute were presented by Boylan at the 2011 Kellogg Institute with credit given to Casazza and Silverman (1996).

1. Accept students where they are and move them as far as they can go.
2. Assume that all students have the potential for growth.
3. Facilitate the transfer of knowledge to new learning situations.
4. Increase cognitive self-awareness.
5. Encourage students to gradually accept responsibility for their own learning.
6. Recognize that learning also includes affective development.
7. Envision all students as potential graduates.

Each principal is framed and displayed throughout the SOAR Institute space.

Tutoring Services

Before SOAR, tutoring at the college was a secondary duty given to a department with other demanding responsibilities. Tutoring was sporadically available for students but with no tracking of student demand or training of tutors. Providing expanded tutoring services for all students at the college was one charge of SOAR. In 2011, college personnel attended trainings by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) and the Association for Tutoring Professionals (ATP). Subsequently, tutor training began in fall 2011 as did tracking of students who came for tutoring. Additional tutors were hired, the number of hours tutors were available for students was expanded, and a tutor supervisor was put in place to oversee tutoring services.

SOAR Tutoring Services (STS) utilizes a drop-in tutoring system which has worked well. The number of tutors has expanded from five to an average of thirty per semester. The number of hours tutors are available to students has grown from a few hours a week to fifty-two hours a week. Math and writing tutors have the greatest demand, and at least one tutor for each of these areas is always available for students. STS makes it a priority to utilize a variety of tutors: undergraduate students, adjunct instructors, graduate students, and retired educators. This diversity enables students at Shelton State to find a tutor with whom they can connect. STS now averages forty-four tutor sessions per day each fall semester and thirty-two sessions per day each spring semester.

In 2013, STS received Level I certification through the College Reading and Learning Association's International Tutor Training Program (ITTPC). This certification signifies that the tutoring program at Shelton State meets national standards for tutor training, data collection, and program elements. In 2015, STS received Level 2 certification from ITTPC, and Level 1 certification has been extended to 2017.

STS has expanded to include additional services. Student Success Seminars are held twice per week on topics such as "Student Survival Kit," "Communicating with Faculty and Staff," "Study Tips," "Overcoming Test Anxiety," "Time Management," "Stress Management," "Managing Personal Finances," and "Test Taking Tips." Attendance at these seminars varies. Sometimes a coach will bring an entire ball team, an instructor will bring an entire class, or an instructor will ask that the seminar be presented during a specific class time. Other times, only one or two students attend. No matter how many attend, feedback

from students has indicated that the sessions are providing valuable assistance. As a result, SOAR staff have decided the time invested is worth the effort. Another opportunity for students provided by SOAR Tutoring Services is placement test help sessions. Students who have yet to take COMPASS or who wish to retest are encouraged to attend a two-hour session held once weekly for reading, writing, and mathematics. Tutors with teaching experience conduct the help sessions. "Technology Basics," offered once per week for an hour, gives students a chance to get hands-on assistance using technology. This service is especially helpful to more mature, non-traditional students who might not be familiar with using computers. Assistance with setting the margins and font for a paper, attaching a document to an email, and other basic tasks using technology are addressed. Assistance with navigating software used in developmental courses is also provided as needed.

Intrusive Advising with T.I.D.E.S.

One thing separating SOAR from some developmental programs is the advising model utilized. Within six months of the director of SOAR being named, three navigators were hired to advise developmental students placing into at least two developmental courses. Navigators follow an intrusive advising model, "Targeted Intervention for Developmental Education Students" (T.I.D.E.S) (Boylan, 2009). An example of intrusive techniques used by navigators includes placing a registration hold on a student's account. This mandates that students meet for advisement before registration opens each semester. It also forces a conversation when students want to drop a class. This practice has resulted in numerous situations in which students benefitted, not only due to the advising that took place, but also in relation to financial aid matters. Another example of intrusive advising occurs when students do not return phone calls or emails. When this happens, navigators find students either before or after class; this contact holds the students accountable.

The process used by navigators begins when students take the placement test. Immediately after testing, students meet with their assigned navigator. This initial meeting between students and navigators includes sharing contact information, and if time allows, discussing general information about Shelton State and the courses students should take during their first term. When registration opens, navigators follow up with students, offering registration assistance, to ensure they register for appropriate classes. Once classes begin, regular meetings with students begin. Most students meet with a navigator every two weeks. The first few meetings include signing a contract and goal-setting. An integral component of the navigator process includes completing a scripted, detailed interview that asks non-cognitive questions. This profile allows navigators a glimpse into factors that often determine student success. (See Appendix A.)

When SOAR was created, the term navigators was specifically chosen to illustrate that these personnel would do more than traditional advising. Hiring the right individuals to serve as navigators is critical. They must demonstrate a desire to serve others, understand that being a cheerleader for students is vital, and be willing to go beyond giving assistance on course selection. Within a year of implementation, navigators were being referred to as life coaches, mentors, "advisors on steroids," and "a personal GPS for college students." With the college maintaining an average of 65% of incoming freshmen placing into developmental courses in 2010 and 2011, three additional navigators were hired in 2012.

Navigators email instructors with the names of the navigators' students in their particular classes at the start of each term. Instructors then know whom to contact with concerns, this contact opening the door to communication between instructors and navigators. Another method of communication is via progress reports that instructors complete three times per semester. Students receive the progress reports from navigators and are responsible for getting the reports completed by their instructors.

The feedback from students and instructors on the navigator process has been positive. A student who graduated in May 2015 stated, "The SOAR Institute has been a tremendous help to my success at Shelton State, especially considering I had been out of school for 25 years. There were so many times I wanted to give up when things got hard, but my navigator would not let me quit. I believe every student should take advantage of the services the SOAR Institute has to offer, especially the navigators and tutors."

Instruction

Support for instructors is the third component of SOAR. Numerous professional development training events have been provided for faculty, including adjunct faculty. The participation and enthusiasm at these trainings has been encouraging. Sample topics have included "Helping Students with Math Anxiety," "Working with Veteran Students," "Students with Disabilities," "International Students and Writing," and "Brain Friendly Learning."

Courses currently taught under the umbrella of the SOAR Institute include "Orientation to College" as well as study skills courses. The one-credit hour orientation course "Orientation to College" is required for any student wishing to earn a credential. Students who place into two or more developmental courses take a three-hour,

non-credit-bearing study skills course which meets twice per week. Sample topics covered include note-taking skills, test-taking skills, time management, communication, test anxiety, memory techniques, and more. A one-credit hour study skills course, "College Study Skills," gives students an opportunity to bring materials from classes and get assistance in organizing notes and preparing for tests.

After two years of research, study, and preparation by the director of SOAR and two instructors, a redesign of developmental mathematics at Shelton State began with the 2014 fall term. In this model, classes meet in computer labs where instructors teach content daily with computer-based assignments used for practice and assessment. Students may take a pre-test for a unit and move ahead to the next unit if the score is at least 80%. While working in a unit, students may work ahead if desired. Students who do not turn in assignments on time are required to visit the math lab for tutoring until they are back on track. Students are also encouraged to go to the math lab for tutoring as needed.

After one semester of the redesigned model, pass rates in developmental math courses rose 14%. (See Appendix B.) Progress still needs to be made, but early results demonstrate that the tide is changing and students are experiencing more success in mathematics.

Instructors in the Language Arts department are working to implement an integrated reading and writing course. The college currently offers one level of developmental reading and two levels of developmental English. The integrated course will replace the upper level developmental English course and the reading course.

In the summer of 2016, SOAR collaborated with the Adult Education Department to offer a summer fast track for students who tested into any developmental course. After taking the college placement test, COMPASS, participating students took the Test of Adult Basic Education to confirm eligibility for the fast track. This was followed by students working through the Adult Education curriculum. Students attended class four hours per day, four days a week for one month. During this time, they concentrated on completing lessons on one subject area: mathematics, reading, or writing. Results of that program are not yet available.

Reaching out to High Schools

During the 2015-16 academic year, a representative of SOAR visited high schools in the service area of Shelton State to share "College Knowledge and the Keys to Student Success." (See Appendices C and E.) Supported by grant funds, the goal of this endeavor was to help better prepare students for the transition from high school to college by providing more information than is typically given in recruiting visits. In fall 2015, seniors in the college's service area heard this information and received related materials. In spring 2016, the information was shared with high school juniors.

Future Plans

The SOAR Institute staff is working on additional opportunities for students. A student organization, Emerging Scholars, is being planned and will launch soon. This program will recognize students who have taken developmental courses and earned a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, and will function as other student organizations on campus.

Conclusion

The SOAR Institute is now a model developmental education program in the state of Alabama. In the five years SOAR has been in existence, sixteen colleges have sent teams to tour and learn more. Several colleges have implemented at least one component of SOAR at their institutions. Recent policy approved for the Alabama Community College System reflects the advising guidelines and philosophy used in SOAR. While this is exciting and validating, the most rewarding thing about what SOAR is doing has been reflected in the feedback received from students and parents. SOAR staff have numerous success stories and share them regularly. The following message from a parent who emailed a navigator sums it up well. "Thank you for being such a blessing to my daughter. When she was struggling through high school, we never dreamed she would want to go to college, much less be excited about it and be able to succeed as much as she has! You all at the SOAR Institute are such a compassionate group of people, and the support you provide for students who, like my daughter, have learning challenges, is invaluable! Thank you for the wonderful work you do!"

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Appendix A: Interview Script used by Navigators

Student Profile Sheet

1. Background Information

A. Why are you going to college? Have you been to college before? Let's check your transcripts.
B. What is your program of study?
C. Do you have a program of study checklist or STARS Guide?
D. What do you feel is your strongest subject?
E. What do you feel is your weakest subject?
F. Do you think your program of study matches your strengths and weaknesses?
G. Have you served in the military?
H. Do you see yourself graduating in this program of study from Shelton State?

2. Time Management

A. Employment
   1. Do you have a job? If so, where?
   2. How many hours per week do you work?
   3. Will your employer work around your school schedule?
B. Family Commitments
   1. Do you have children?
   2. Are you the caregiver for anyone else?
C. Do you have any other commitments that require a lot of your time? (church, PTA, etc.)

3. Resources

A. Transportation
   1. Where do you live?
   2. How do you get to Shelton State?
   3. Is transportation ever a problem?
B. Financial Aid
   1. How are you paying for college?
   2. Have you completed the paperwork?
   3. How do you know you are receiving this aid?

4. Miscellaneous

A. Are you a morning person?
B. Are you a "people" person?
C. Do you have test anxiety?
D. Are you aware that we have an Office of Disability Services?
E. What most scares you about college?
F. What about college excites you most?
G. What other information would you like me to know about you? For example, hobbies, interests, talents.
H. If you have any learning disabilities or are in need of accommodations, please see the Office of Disability Services.
I. *(if classes have not yet started)* Have you found the rooms for your classes?

Our Next Meeting Time: _____

Appendix B: Developmental Mathematics Redesign

History—Status prior to Redesign

- Two, 4-hour math courses (090 and 098)
- Emporium model 2004 to 2008
- Average pass rate (from 2004 – 2012)

	Years	Combined Pass Rate	Passed 090	Passed 098
Fall 9-yr Average	2004 to 2012	32%	35%	29%
Spring 9-yr Average	2004 to 2012	29.5%	33%	26%

Redesign – Implemented Fall 2014

- Four, 2-hour courses (080, 090, 091, 092) set up in partial terms
- Two units/modules per course

	Combined Pass Rate	Passed 080	Passed 090	Passed 091	Passed 092
Fall 2014	46% (511/1116)	47% (192/403)	59% (110/186)	31% (127/414)	73% (82/113)
Spring 2015	45% (300/668)	41% (51/124)	47% (76/163)	43% (109/255)	51% (64/126)
Fall 2015	43% (393/906)	50% (18/36)	38% (145/386)	44% (127/288)	53% (103/196)
Spring 2016	45% (285/636)	38% (5/13)	33% (53/253)	54% (101/187)	52% (96/183)

The Next Course (Fall 2014 through Fall 2015)

- 59% (156/263) of students who enrolled in Intermediate Algebra (transferable, credit-bearing) after completing developmental math passed the course on the first attempt. This compares to a 43% pass rate in the same course for students who did not take developmental math courses.
- 68% (58/85) of students who enrolled in Technical Mathematics after completing developmental math passed the course on the first attempt.

Appendix C: College Knowledge

- College publications critical for student success include the Catalog, the Registration Guide or Schedule of Classes, and the Website. Students should familiarize themselves with the information found in these documents.
- Mandatory placement into courses is based on ACCUPLACER, SAT, or ACT scores.
- A program of study includes the courses required to obtain a degree or certificate.
- The STARS guide shows courses transferring to four-year schools in Alabama.
- Registration is only available online; register early and pay in full before the deadline.
- Terms of enrollment: fall, late August through December; spring, January through mid-May; and summer, late May through mid-August.
- Classes are either full term and last the entire semester (approximately 16 weeks) or partial term and last for half of the semester (approximately 8 weeks). Partial terms are either during the first half or second half of a semester.
- When selecting classes, note the class location; some classes may be offered on different campuses.
- When registering for classes, the section numbers indicate the following: 01–49= full term day classes; 50's=-full term evening classes; 60's=first term; 70's=second term; 80's=online.
- Class meeting days are as follows: M=Monday, T=Tuesday, W=Wednesday, R=Thursday, F = Friday.
- Credit hours determine the length of a class.
- GPA stands for Grade Point Average and is determined by the grade earned in a course and the number of credit hours per course.
- Being a full-time or part-time student depends on many factors. For example, federal financial aid full-time is a minimum of twelve hours, whereas an academic scholarship requires more to be full-time.
- Drop/add is a period of time, usually within the first three days of a term, in which students can change their schedule without penalty. Refer to the Registration Guide or Schedule of Classes for details.
- Withdrawing from a class (dropping after drop/add) must be done by the published deadline each term. The course stays on the student transcript and a grade of "W" is assigned. This action can affect federal financial aid.
- Completely withdrawing from college requires meeting with an educational planner.
- Books and computer program/software access codes are required in many courses but are not provided. Tools for technical courses may also be required. Students must purchase these supplies.
- Every class has a syllabus and course outline. These documents provide important dates and policies related to the class.
- Final exam times are longer than normal class times. Final exams may be scheduled on a day and time that is different from the class time. Check each class syllabus for details.
- Class attendance is crucial. Be on time, stay the entire time, take notes, and participate actively in class.
- A student hour is a designated time and place during which instructors are available to help students.
- Communicate regularly with instructors. Let instructors know if you will be absent or need assistance.
- Support services include educational planning, the Office of Disability Services, Career Services Center, libraries, and tutoring.
- Check your email daily. Email is the official communication method of the College.
- No report cards are mailed. Check grades online.

Appendix D: Keys to Student Success

Key 1: Respect

One key to becoming a successful college student is to treat yourself, peers, faculty, and staff with high regard. Portray self-worth through your dress and behavior. Acknowledge others' ideas, opinions, and thoughts by listening before responding.

Key 2: Class Attendance

One key to becoming a successful college student is to attend required class time, which includes arriving on time and remaining until dismissed. Notify your instructors concerning excused absences or tardies. See instructors to make up missed work. Be prepared by completing assignments and by participating in class activities. Use class time effectively and efficiently.

Key 3: Study Habits

One key to becoming a successful college student is by adopting good study habits. Keep up with assignments, use available resources, and get help when needed. Be aware of how you study best. These habits can make learning new information both easier and quicker and will make study time far more effective and efficient.

Key 4: Communication

One key to becoming a successful college student is to use the appropriate method of communication (i.e. face-to-face meetings, phone calls, e-mails). Keep lines of communication open with faculty, staff, and peers. Communication involves asking questions, listening to understand others, observing, verifying information received, and sharing ideas. Use standard English in written and oral communication. Through communication, collaboration and cooperation occur.

Key 5: Time Management

One key to becoming a successful college student is to plan and manage how to spend each day, week, and month to achieve desired goals effectively. Maintaining a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly calendar is essential to managing time. Make a list of what needs to be accomplished, prioritize this list, and plan accordingly.

The keys to becoming a successful college student are broad ideals embraced by Shelton State Community College. The College has high expectations for your success, and provides resources whereby you can learn and grow. We challenge you to demonstrate student responsibility by making the decisions and taking the necessary actions to achieve your goals. Helping you achieve your goals is our highest priority.

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Reimagining and Expanding Accelerated Learning at a Midwestern Minority-Serving Institution

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This article explores how a composition program at a minority serving, Midwestern university used an accelerated learning approach in its general education composition course sequence. Using research in the area of literacy theory and developmental education, as well as assessment data, the program designed a two-course general education composition sequence that includes increased instructional time, college credit, and an embedded peer-writing mentor. The major goal of the program is to provide students with an opportunity to strengthen their writing skills while continuing on the path toward graduation. This article outlines the ways the program has evolved over the past 20 years.

During the 1995-1996 academic year, one Midwestern minority serving institution, reviewed its composition program and made changes to its then developmental learning courses. As a result, the program established an accelerated learning program (ALP), and two new courses were introduced. The introduction of these courses essentially eliminated developmental or remedial English courses, in a traditional sense, and replaced them with college-level composition courses with embedded support to strengthen students' skills. Students were no longer required to take non-credit courses that were designed to "get them ready" for college-level courses. Students were not "mainstreamed" into courses, and students were not required to enroll in two courses at the same time. Support that students needed was included in a single course. The approach to ALP instruction employed by CSI considered the variety of experiences and linguistic features that students bring with them to the classroom as well as the financial situation of students who attend the university.

In addition, the ALP courses were further intended to develop students' critical thinking skills, strengthen their writing skills, and incorporate technology in the classroom. These courses have allowed the program to capitalize on the assets students brought to the environment by removing the developmental or remedial stigma. Furthermore, students have no longer had to pay for a course that did not satisfy a graduation requirement.

The overall goal of the redesign of the composition program's developmental sequence was to give students assistance on the front end so they could be successful as they move into more intense writing courses. The program took a themed approach to writing prompts that allowed students to write about contemporary issues. While this ALP model has been in place for approximately twenty years, assessment data and program review have led to changes over time. During the fall 2013 semester, an embedded peer-writing mentor was added to the first level ALP course. As of spring 2015, the program redesigned the second-level ALP course. The goal of this article is to describe the ways a minority serving institution reimagined and redesigned its traditional developmental English composition sequence into a sequence of courses the expanded on the idea of accelerated learning.

Developing the Accelerated Learning Program

Student preparedness for higher education has been explored from a historical perspective, including concerns expressed by Harvard professors about incoming their incoming students (Boylan, 2003). Literature suggests that first-year students have long had difficulty negotiating and adjusting to the college culture and its literacy expectations (Bartholomae, 1986; Conley, 2007; Gee, 2001; Lindquist & Seitz, 2009; Reason, Terenzini, & Domingo, 2006; Rose, 1979, 1985; Young, 2004). To address concerns with under-preparedness, colleges and universities have attempted to employ a variety of strategies (Adams, Gearhart, Miller, & Roberts, 2009; Lalicker, 1999). Specifically, English composition is an area that has been explored because it tends to be a course in which students start developing college literacies that include but are not limited to writing. Writing is a skill that students use across disciplines and is often the method used for assessment of content knowledge, critical thinking, and communication. Composition courses also have the opportunity to ease the transition from high school to college by providing instruction that helps students make sense of the many implicit requirements of being successful in college. Conley (2007) notes, "one of the major reasons that students falter in college is the gap between their high-school experiences and college expectations" (p. 2). This gap can affect student retention. In a college course that requires writing, for example, instructors are expecting students to independently take themselves through the writing process and submit their best work. If students come to

college expecting one thing, so to speak, but arrive to find another, they may find themselves finished before they begin. Another issue that affects retention is time toward completion. Students who arrive at college and place into traditional non-credit courses may also leave before completion. What follows is an exploration of the specific ways the ALP model has been used at the university to assist students with developing and strengthening their writing and associated skills.

Accelerated Learning in Composition I

The content of the ALP English course is the same as the non-ALP Composition I course. The courses cover content judgment, analysis, introduction to argumentation and working with source material, and writing. The ALP course embeds the needed support (six hours of instructional time and the peer-writing mentor) to help students strengthen their skills in these areas and increase the likelihood of their moving out of the ALP sequence and on to the non-ALP Composition II course. Both courses also follow the same assessment plan in that students are required to produce, at minimum, four critical essays, four summaries and critiques of source material, five timed writing assessments, and a 400-450 word argumentative essay in 90 minutes. Three graders (faculty who teach Composition I, both ALP and non-ALP; and Composition II, both ALP and non-ALP courses, during the semester) score the exit assessment.

Accelerated Learning in Composition II

Initially, the program only provided accelerated support at the Composition I level. Students who passed the Composition I ALP course were allowed to enroll in Composition II, which requires a 2,500 word, multi-source research paper. As a result of continued program review and assessment data, it was determined that some students needed support throughout the entire two-course composition sequence. This continued review resulted in the introduction of a Composition II-level ALP course, which previously was designed to assist transfer students with their writing skills.

In order to be eligible for enrollment in the Composition II ALP course, students must earn at least a C grade, based on coursework and other measures, in the first composition course but have failed the exit essay assessment. In the Composition II ALP course, students continue to receive support while progressing through the composition sequence. It is believed that some Composition I students perform at an acceptable level (C or better) on course assignments but may have a difficult time demonstrating their ability in a timed situation, which is the 400-450 word argumentative exit essay assessment. Consequently, allowing these students to continue on to the Composition II but with ongoing support seemed more appropriate than forcing students to repeat. To make the course comparable to Composition II, students are required to complete a research assignment. The Composition II ALP course is modeled after the Composition I ALP course and includes six hours per week of instructional time and a peer-writing mentor. The peer-writing mentors adhere to the same eligibility requirements as those assigned to mentor the ALP Composition I courses. In addition, program faculty also realized that although some students place into a non-ALP Composition I course, they are not ready to meet the expectations of the Composition II course where the instruction is more focused on research. Those students enroll in the Composition II level ALP course as well. The overall goal is to provide students with the support they need while keeping them in the pipeline and actively progressing toward graduation. Three graders (faculty who teach Composition I, both ALP and non-ALP and Composition II, both ALP and non-ALP courses during the semester) score the exit assessments.

Components of the ALP Courses

Increased Instructional Time

ALP models include a range of options in terms of providing students with additional support to help them acquire or further develop college-level literacy skills. Mainstreaming, simultaneous enrollment, and studio are among a few options that have been used in ALP courses. Research indicates that the more "hoops" students have to jump through in order to make it to "college-level" courses, the more likely they are to drop out or stop out (Adams, Gearhart, Miller & Roberts, 2009). To address this concern, the university's ALP model approaches studio time as an embedded/extended portion of the course. This translates into increased time for both instruction and practice as the studio time is actually built into the course. Specifically, the ALP model includes time during which students are able to practice their skills with the instructor present. For example, the studio is worked into the class meeting so courses might meet two days a week from 8:00 a.m. to10:45 a.m. Students earn and pay for a three-credit hour course, but they meet physically for six hours a week. The ALP courses meet in the English Literacy Center (ELC), which has 22 computers and a space for small groups and workshops.

The ALP courses include the same student learning outcomes as the non-ALP courses, which have been developed using Bloom's Taxonomy verbs (noted in bold in the list below). These goals are stated in this way, partly to make the learning outcomes transparent for students so that it will be clear what skills they will acquire during the class. In addition, these student-learning outcomes have

helped the program measure exactly what type of learning has taken place. These outcomes have also helped program faculty articulate, to both internal and external stakeholders, the skills taught in the course, something which has been helpful during conversations across disciplines. The outcomes are as follows:

1. **Develop and employ** strategies for invention, such as free writing, brainstorming, and clustering.
2. **Employ** the writing process, inventing, discovery, drafting, revising, editing, and polishing.
3. **Identify and apply** the formal requirements of academic expository essays.
4. **Apply** the rudiments of argumentative essays.
5. **Produce** accurate summaries of texts.
6. **Avoid** plagiarism.
7. **Identify** ways that the audience and purpose for writing shape a written work.
8. **Increase critical thinking skills** and understanding of social issues.
9. **Apply** the conventions for writing in Standard Edited American English.
10. **Demonstrate** the ability to use conventions for writing in Standard Edited American English.
11. **Develop** an extemporaneous argumentative essay of 400–450 words in a timed examination.

The recent addition of peer writing mentors, who are embedded into the ALP courses, is intended to help students better meet these learning outcomes. Mentors are available both during and after class to assist students.

Peer-Writing Mentor

The decision to add peer-writing mentors was based on a review of the ways the writing center has been used by students in the first-year composition sequence. This review showed that students did not independently seek out tutoring services, but instead tended to visit the learning center when tutoring was mandated or attached to a grade. Furthermore, it was also found that many of the course requirements and instructor expectations were being "lost in translation," so to speak, when students attempted to communicate their teachers' expectations with tutors. As a result, the program sought ways to provide students with more seamless access to writing support. The program worked with the First-Year Experience unit to develop the embedded peer-writing mentor model.

During a midterm meeting, faculty discussed the use of the learning center to try to uncover if and how students were encouraged to seek assistance from an outside tutor. The discussion revealed the following key points:

1. Composition instructors did not have a system for encouraging and/or requiring students to seek help at the learning center.
2. Composition instructors were not confident with the type/quality of assistance students reported receiving in the learning center.
3. Composition instructors were not confident that students would actually go to the learning center.

Based on assessment data, composition instructors agreed that students needed additional help with basic writing tasks including but not limited to invention and polishing. Faculty were reluctant to tell an instructor that he or she "must" require a student to visit the learning center, but it was also concluded that students needed and benefited from quality assistance outside of class. The first step in resolving this tension was following the lead of the Foreign Languages and Literatures (FLL) division of the department. The FLL department requires students who are enrolled in a 1000-level Foreign Language course to visit the language lab at least 10 times throughout the semester. Students must have their language lab card signed by the tutor each time they visit. Since the department had just developed an English Literacy Center, some faculty and staff thought that developing a tutoring requirement for the ALP Composition I course could be resolved in this way. Students would be required to visit the ELC tutor and have their ELC card signed. However, some composition faculty members were still a bit resistant to assigning points for visiting the ELC, and in short, did not want to be responsible for monitoring this added requirement. Also, this plan did not resolve the issue of students getting the specific help the instructor wanted. Students still needed to be able to communicate their needs to a tutor that might know little about the instructor's expectations. Beginning in the fall 2013semester, the department tried a new approach to providing students with opportunities to seek additional assistance outside of class. The First-Year Experience division provided seed money for the embedded peer-writing mentors in the Composition I ALP course.

During the first semester of the embedded peer-writing mentor program, the mentors were graduate students majoring in English. Each mentor was required to attend each course he or she was assigned to cover for the entire class meeting. Since the ALP sections meet for extended time, the mentors were able to assist students during the practical application period of the class in the form of leading small group workshops and one-on-one assistance. The course instructor also worked with students during this time. The mentors were in place on the first day of class. After the first implementation of the peer-writing mentor, the exit essay data revealed that pass rates increased by 10% from the previous semester. At this point, the program decided to continue to develop the use of peer writing mentors in the ALP courses.

As mentors graduated or were not able to return to their mentoring post for the next semester, the program was somewhat forced to redesign the program requirements, which initially only offered the opportunity to graduate English majors. The program began to reach out to undergraduate students who met the eligibility requirements.

Peer-writing mentor eligibility requirements To be eligible for participation in the program as a mentor, students must (a) be in good academic standing, (b) have earned at least 60 credit hours, (c) have passed the university writing assessment, (d) be enrolled full-time, (e) pass the assessment of grammar and writing, and (f) successfully complete the interview process. The process allows the director of composition and the department chair to vet the mentors prior to putting them in a class where they will have to work with both the instructor and students.

To reach a larger pool of eligible students who also had the flexibility to attend a course during the morning and afternoon hours, the program allowed both undergraduate and graduate students who met the six requirements to serve as peer-writing mentors. The mentors also hold "office hours" outside of the class meetings where students can go to get additional assistance. The mentor program allows students to build a relationship and have a single point of contact with someone designated to provide them with assistance. In addition, the instructors feel more comfortable with sending their students to the mentors outside of class time because they know the mentors are aware of the course and assignment requirements. The classroom instructors have also mentored the mentors, and the mentors undergo a national training program that is provided by the learning center.

Working with the peer-writing mentor outside of class

As previously stated, the composition faculty members have agreed that students benefit from quality help outside of class. However, during the first year of the program, faculty reported that they only *suggested* or *encouraged* students to meet with the writing mentor outside of class and did not track if students actually took advantage of the mentor for additional help. It became clear that students—and faculty—needed a process if the assistance outside of class was to be used effectively. To help facilitate this, in the spring of 2015, the program developed a referral sheet and criteria for mandating that students see the mentor for help. The referral sheet was activated every time a student received below a C grade on any assignment. The instructor completed the referral, with detailed instructors for the mentor, and gave the sheet to the student. The student took the sheet to the mentor during the out-of-class session, and the mentor completed the remainder of the form detailing the assistance that was provided. The mentor then signed the form and returned it to the instructor to verify that the student received assistance as required. In an effort to "put some teeth" into this procedure, it was also agreed that that instructors would not accept the next assignment until the student had visited the mentor. This meant that the instructor, the student, and the mentor were accountable. If the student did not make an appointment with the mentor in a timely fashion, then the student might miss an opportunity to submit the next assignment. In addition, the mentor was responsible for meeting with the student and verifying that the student received assistance. This "closing the loop" approach resulted in the program's ability to track how the mentors were utilized more closely, and it also helped the instructor integrate the mentor more into the class. A further important point that the department faculty agreed on is that mentors are not a replacement for instructors' office hours. Instructors are still responsible for holding office hours and assisting students. In many cases, however, the mentors have allowed faculty to work with students who needed more instructor attention.

Much of the research in the area of developmental education focuses on community colleges; however, many students entering universities are still unable to demonstrate college-level literacy skills, so this is an issue universities face as well. This particular ALP model shares similarities with other ALP models in that it reduces the time spent in developmental non-credit course work. What makes this ALP model unique is that it was started long before the call of the last few years to reduce the number of developmental courses for students; in addition, it allows all students to begin with college-level composition; in addition, many who would have in the past had to repeat Composition I, can now continue on to an ALP Composition II course, both of which include embedded support to help students strengthen their skills. Students in the ALP courses complete the same work as those in the non-ALP courses. This speaks to the call issued by Adams (1993) in his work, Basic Writing Reconsidered. Adams (1993) states,

> As Pat Bizzell put it at the summer conference of the council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) in 1988, we are now teaching fairly much the same way whether we are teaching in a basic writing classroom, a freshman English classroom, or a senior writing seminar; students are writing, and we and they are talking about their writing. The *levels* of performance may differ but the *types* of performance demanded are quite similar. (p. 24)

It has been the goal of the university's ALP faculty to make the line between the ALP courses and those considered "traditional" composition courses almost invisible.

Reflections on Acceleration

As stated by Boylan (2003), students have always needed further development when entering college. In an environment where many students receive some form of financial assistance, spending time in non-credit courses or repeating courses may have a negative impact on students both intellectually and financially. The ALP model has helped to resolve that tension. This model has provided students with access to college-credit and skill-building opportunities. Many factors contribute to retention and persistence. Initially, this program was envisioned as a means to address students' need for development while keeping them in the pipeline, reduce time toward degree completion, and avoid exhausting financial assistance before completion. As the program faculty continued to review data and make adjustments, the program developed into a model for helping students move beyond the stigma of being in a "developmental" course and helping the university rethink its approach to helping students.

The question here is not whether the ALP model has been successful, but rather has the composition program continued to evolve to meet the needs of the students who attend.

Since the 1995-1996 academic year, the composition program has utilized an ALP approach to serving the needs of students in the composition sequence. The provocative questions that one might ask regarding this program include: Are students better writers? Does this approach result in students earning a degree faster or at all? The reality is that those questions are difficult to answer and a sequence of two courses is not the determining factor. We would like to think that the ALP approach has kept students who enter the university still in need of writing development engaged and progressing toward completion of a degree. The goal that prompted the development of this ALP model was to retain them from one semester to the next so they can continue to receive the support they need. If the idea of ALP as a method for retaining students is kept at the forefront, the data has provided the program with insight. What we do know is that 41% of the fall 2013 FTF ALP cohort was still enrolled as of spring 2015, 33% of the fall 2013 FTF cohort enrolled in Composition II immediately after passing the ALP Composition I, and 75% of the cohort completed Composition II with a final grade of C or higher. This means that we know 41% of the students in the ALP fall 2013 cohort completed four complete semesters of college, which is about double the graduation rate. Composition faculty hope the 2016-2017 academic year brings more insight in regard to degree completion. What is true is that there are a variety of factors that influence student success, and developmental education can indeed become a barrier (Adams, et al., 2009; Brancard, DeLott Baker, Jensen, 2006; Edgecombe, 2011; Jenkins, Speroni, Belfield, Smith, Jaggars, Edgecombe, 2010). Accelerated learning has the potential to provide students with the needed spring board into college that allows them to be supported as they accumulate the skills that they need for success.

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Appendix A: University Demographics

By definition, this university is a minority-serving institution (MSI). By enrollment, this institution is a predominately Black/African American institution (PBI). MSIs are defined as institutions that enroll a high number of minorities (O'Brien & Zudak, 1998). According to data in the university fact book, in the fall of 1996, when the two accelerated English courses were new, the undergraduate enrollment was 6,892 students. Freshman enrollment was 95% percent African American and 70% of undergraduate students were between the ages of 18-19. As of fall 2014, enrollment was about 5,000 students. The institution has consistently served a large number of students in transition, either from the local city secondary school district or from the city community college system. During the fall 2014 semester, 65% of undergraduate students received Pell Grants, with 57% living at or below the poverty line and 57% of the students who attend the university were first generation. Approximately 34% of the fall 2014 first-time freshman (FTF) enrolled in the accelerated Composition I course.

Data from the university fact book.

Appendix B: Writing Assessment and Placement

Students entering the university are required to take the COMPASS eWrite essay placement examination. Once students are placed and enrolled in the appropriate composition course, students are given a pretest during the second week of class. This pretest is required of both ALP Composition I students and non-ALP Composition I students, is administered during class time, and is modeled after the final exit essay examination that is administered during week 16. The week two pretest allows the instructor to (a) become familiar with the students enrolled in the course as writers, and (b) adjust instruction so that it is meaningful for the students who are actually enrolled in the course. ALP courses are also able to utilize the peer-writing mentor immediately, and in addition, the instructor, the student, and the program can more easily gauge student growth at the end of the course (when students complete the exit essay examination). This section will explain each method of assessing student writing from entry into the university until exit from the composition course sequence.

University Placement Examination

Table 1 illustrates the English placement exam cutoff scores. All students are required to take the university placement examination, regardless of their ACT scores. Based on the placement results, students are *required* to enroll in either the accelerated Composition I course or the non-accelerated Composition I course. After 2010, the university moved to the COMPASS eWrite system and data regarding pass rates were no longer tracked internally. In addition, the rubric used to evaluate students' writing was also not available. Provided in this section is a summary of the components of students' writing that are evaluated. Figure 1 provides an example of a writing prompt for the diagnostic placement examination.

Table 1. English Placement Cutoff Scores

Student Status	Score on COMPASS eWrite	Placement
Freshman	2–8	Accelerated Composition I
Freshman	9–12	Non-accelerated Composition I
Transferring Composition I	2–7	Accelerated Composition II
Transferring Composition I	8–12	Non-accelerated Composition II

Figure 1. Sample Diagnostic Placement Examination Prompts

Write a well-organized, well-developed 300-350-word argumentative response.
Write a letter to your local council member advocating for a community project.

With the changes to the literacy skills students are taught in high school because of the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, the university saw it fitting to move from an expository writing prompt to an argumentative writing prompt. Students may retest once. The placement exam is the prerequisite for the first course in the composition sequence. Students must perform at the novice level [score 9 or above] to be eligible to enroll in the Composition I course that is not in the ALP.

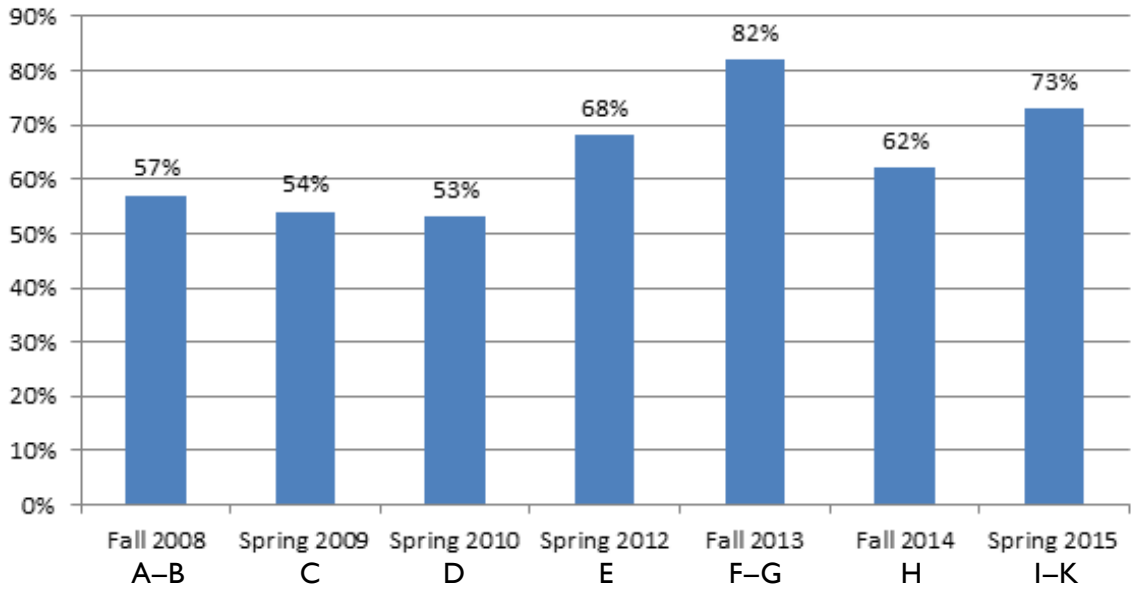
Summary of Scoring Guide for Evaluating Placement Examinations

The placement examination requires students to develop a 300-350 word argumentative essay that addresses an issue identified by a provided prompt. Students must demonstrate their ability to take a position or make a claim, develop a thesis statement, and support their position or claim. At least two sides of the issue must be provided in the essay. The quality of the writing is assessed in the following areas: a) focus: stays on topic; b) content: includes relevant detail; c) organization: clear introduction, body, and conclusion; d) style: uses academic language; and e) conventions: minimal errors in grammar.

Appendix C: Accelerated Learning Program Data and Associated Program Changes—A Historical Review

The ALP model has been used by this university for about 20 years. The program has a history of collecting and making adjustments to the program based on the assessment data. The program also has made adjustments to the way data are collected in order to provide instruction that is helpful as students negotiate and adjust to the writing demands of college. This section will explore assessment data for the years when major changes were made to the program (2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2015). Table 1 illustrates the major changes that have occurred over the last six years and provides data for the exit essay assessment that are aligned to those changes. Each change will be explored in-depth in this section. Table 2 provides assessment data for both the ALP and non-ALP Composition I courses respectively.

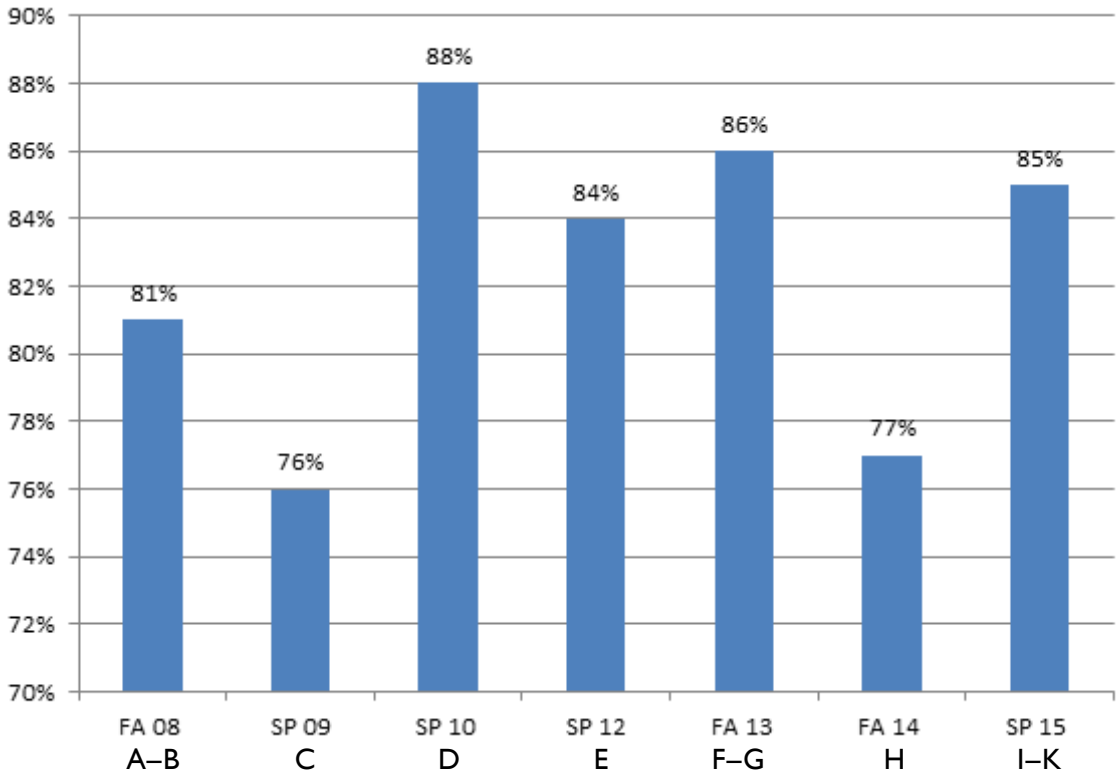
Table 1. ALP exit assessment pass rates aligned with program changes.



Changes to Program

A. Assessment instrument changed
B. Assessment embedded in course
C. Students type the assessment in the ELC
D. Mandatory end of the semester assessment conference
E. Reading component added
F. Peer writing mentors were embedded
G. Reading packet distributed 3 weeks prior to exam
H. Theme developed throughout the semester
I. Course sessions taught in ELC
J. Pretest added
K. Referral form added

Table 2. Non-ALP exit assessment pass rates aligned with program changes



Changes to Program

A. Assessment instrument changed
B. Assessment embedded in course
C. Students type the assessment in the ELC
D. Mandatory end of the semester assessment conference
E. Reading component added
F. Reading packet distributed 3 weeks prior to exam
G. Theme developed throughout the semester
H. Course sessions taught in ELC
I. Pretest added

The following section provides an in-depth discussion of the major changes that have taken place in both the ALP and non-ALP Composition I courses over time. The program faculty had agreed from the start that since the ALP Composition I course carries the same college credit as the non-ALP composition courses, any changes made to the Composition I course would be made at both levels (ALP and non-ALP). This has helped to make a stronger case that the ALP course is not simply a "watered down" version of the non-ALP course. The ALP course covers the same content, is assessed in the same way, and holds to same "end result" concerning students' production of a 400-450 word argumentative essay in 90-minutes. As discussed previously in this article, the ALP courses have built-in supports in the form of the embedded peer writing mentors and increased instructional time to help students meet this goal. What has been discovered is that the major changes made had the same effect on both the ALP and non-ALP courses. That is, when a change was introduced, if the exit assessment pass rates decreased or increased in the ALP section, the pass rates increased or decreased in the non-ALP section. This caused the program to review the change for effectiveness and make adjustments as needed because it became clear that the changes had an effect on all students.

Fall 2008

Two major changes occurred in the fall 2008 semester. The first changed was to the type of assessment administered. The second change was to the way the students produced the examination. These changes resulted in more robust data. Prior to the fall 2008 semester, the exit examination required students to produce a 300-350 word essay in response to an expository prompt. Students were allowed 90-minutes to draft and polish the piece of writing. This assessment matched the university placement examination. Based on a review of the pass rates and discussions regarding the types of writing students would be required to produce as they move into Composition II and writing-intensive courses beyond the general education composition sequence, faculty decided to adjust the assessment so that it prepared students for writing experiences beyond composition. Since the university placement examination was also a 300-350 expository essay, the composition program faculty felt that it was not able to determine if growth had occurred. Beginning in the fall

2008 semester, the Composition I (ALP and non-ALP courses) exit essay assessment was changed to a 400-450 word argumentative essay. This change allowed the program to measure skill growth and skill change.

The exit exams in the Composition courses were administered on the Saturday prior to the week of final examinations. The exam was administered in a large room with all composition instructors present, and students were required to handwrite the exam using specialized examination paper. At the end of the 90-minutes testing period, each instructor collected the examinations for the course(s) he or she was teaching, verified that all students completed the examination, and gave the examinations to the director of composition for sorting in preparation for the departmental grading day. This process had been in place for at least 20 years. Students who missed the examination day were allowed to make-up the exam on the next Saturday. After review of the missed exam data, it was determined that there was a high incidence of students missing the examination and the missed exam testing date. Also, when faculty reported student data, all students who did not attend the initial exam testing date were reported as missed exam students. This made it difficult to prepare for the missed-exam date because some of the "missed exam" students actually unofficially withdrew from the course or stopped attending and had no intention of taking the exam. Also, some students simply did not attend the exam on the first testing date and "opted" to attend the missed-exam date. For some students, this made registering for courses difficult because they did not realize that the exam was a prerequisite for many upper-level courses within and outside of the English department. Some majors use this assessment as an indicator for a students' readiness for upper-level, critical thinking courses that are writing-intensive. This left students and the English department with the task of trying to offer an opportunity for testing after the semester had concluded. Furthermore, this impacted program data as the data reports had already been submitted to university-wide committees, thus, making the data not an accurate reflection of all students in the composition program.

In an attempt to reduce the number of students who missed this final high stakes exam, in the fall 2008, the department decided to offer the exam during the regularly scheduled class time. This drastically reduced the number of students missing the examination, and the program was able to more accurately capture the range of student skills in the assessment documents. Because students are allowed 90 minutes to produce the exam, the department scheduled the Composition I courses using a two-day a week meeting schedule.

Spring 2009

To increase students' use of technology and provide them with an opportunity to develop and practice the skills they would most likely use in their careers, the program phased out the handwritten examination and required all students to produce a typed document in the department's English Literacy Center. To increase students' technology skills, each class was scheduled to meet at least one day a week in the English Literacy Center, which is a full computer lab. The program felt that students would most likely be required to produce written documents in electronic format as they matriculated and as they began their careers.

Spring 2010

Part of the exit assessment process is that students meet with the instructors to review the examination and get the examination results so that they know in which class to enroll during the next semester. This is an important part of the process because students who do not conference with the instructor are likely to enroll in the wrong course and then be dropped from that course. This often had an impact on scheduling as well as a student's financial assistance since students are typically dropped within the first week of the semester. If a student is not able to enroll in the appropriate course or find a course to replace those lost credit hours, his or her registration status could change from full- to part-time and result in reduced financial aid or debt to the university. The department instituted a required exit exam conference. Students were required to sign up for a conference time during the designated exit exam conference period. A notice was sent to the student's academic advisor if the student did not attend. This change resulted in a reduction in the number of students registering for the wrong English Composition II course. This also kept the student engaged with the instructor until final grades were submitted. This conference allowed both the student and the instructor to discuss the exit assessment results and overall course progress prior to the final submission of grades. In addition, academic advisors were kept in the loop concerning student progress.

Spring 2012

The English essay-scoring guide that was used to assess student essays and the exit assessment were both reviewed in light of the other assessment changes. The scoring guide that was used from about 1996 was a holistic rubric. After review of the scoring guide, program- level outcomes, and student-level outcomes, it was determined that the holistic guide did not offer much detail in regard to student writing strengths and areas in need of further development. As previously stated, three scorers evaluate the exit assessment. The course instructor serves as the

first reader of the exam, and two additional faculty members score each exam. Two of the three scores must be passing in order for the assessment to receive the passing designation. This is the same for a not passing designation. The revised scoring guide provided clear level progression, assigned a score for each element of the rubric, and provided an overall score for the entire paper. This allowed scorers to give students credit for what they did well in their assessment and point to areas where development was still needed, which made the exit assessment conference more useful for both the student and instructor. The overall goal of the program is to provide students with foundational skills and with information about their writing that can and will be further developed throughout their time in college. The holistic rubric did not provide that level of specificity.

Fall 2013

The program expanded the idea of the mentor texts or reading packet that was first introduced in the spring of 2012. Students were typically provided with the reading packet in preparation for the exit assessment at least two weeks in advance of the assessment date. This allowed instructors an opportunity to review the packet with students. It also allowed instructors an opportunity to help students make connections between the skills they had learned in class and ways to apply them to the exit assessment. In an attempt to provide students and instructors with more time to work with the reading packet, the program decided to provide the reading packet to instructors for distribution at least three weeks in advance of the assessment date. As it turned out, during this semester, there was a 10% increase in exit assessment pass rates. Faculty believe that this additional time with the reading material contributed to the increase.

Fall 2014

The reading packet, or mentor text, typically explores a current event or issue that has occurred in the world during the semester. Since instructors do not know what issue or event will be addressed by the reading material, they spend the semester building students' writing skills in general and not necessarily around a specific idea or topic. The program faculty believe that this has helped students "learn to write" instead of "learning to address a topic." However, the faculty also decided to try a thematic approach, which allowed students to develop their writing and thinking around a specific theme for the entire semester. The exit assessment would then be based on that particular theme. Faculty voted on the theme a semester in advance. This approach proved to be more difficult than expected. It was difficult to keep students engaged in a particular theme for the entire semester as each semester brings its own current events and issues. Instructors also felt that this approach was limiting and, in fact, may have contributed to the decrease in the pass rates for the exit assessment. Consequently, faculty decided to return to the more broad approach to writing instruction that centered on a particular theme after the reading packet was distributed.

Spring 2015

Before the spring 2015 semester, the program used the university English placement examination as the pretest for both the ALP and non-ALP Composition I courses. As previously mentioned in this article, during ongoing program review of data, it was determined that as assessment changes occurred in the program and at the university, the university English placement examination was no longer an accurate pretest. The program developed a pretest that was more closely aligned with the exit assessment. This program change was discussed, in detail, in Appendix B.

Overall, spring 2009 and fall 2014 reflect a "valley" concerning pass rates on the exit assessment. What was revealed is that during the spring 2009 semester, students were required to type the assessment during the 90-minute time allotted for the assessment. Issues with technology use were noted as a barrier to student success during this semester, and, at this time, the department only had one computer lab/literacy center. The one departmental computer lab/literacy center meant that instructors could only hold one class meeting per week in the center. Students, especially those with technology anxiety, were not able to build their skills and confidence through practice. Students communicated anxiety around the ability to produce a typed exam in 90 minutes and some students had limited exposure to computers. This change was also an adjustment for instructors, as they had to be strategic in their planning of practice assessments and in class writings. Instructors had to be sure to schedule in-class writing sessions on days when their courses met in the literacy center. This was an instructional shift. The program used these data to propose university support for the renovation of the literacy center and the establishment of an additional center. The proposal was accepted, resulting in increased class time spent in the literacy center practicing and building students technology-related skills. Instructors and students were able to adjust to the new technology component of the Composition I courses (ALP and non-ALP) and, in spring 2015, the program was able to establish and dedicate two literacy centers to Composition I, ALP and non-ALP courses.

The program saw another "valley," so to speak, in the data during the fall 2014 semester, which was the semester the program took a thematic approach to writing develop-

ment for the entire semester. At that time, faculty reported concerns that the thematic approach was limiting and they were not able to engage students' skills around current events that were happening in the world during the semester. The program continues to collect and review data each semester at two points. Instructors review pretest data as a group and make adjustments based on their students' skills.

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Embedded Remediation: A New Paradigm

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Guttman College

Guttman Community College (GCC), a newly-established, urban community college, part of the City University of New York (CUNY), enrolls a largely traditional student body which is also predominantly minority. Out of 824 students enrolled in fall 2015, 49% were under the age of 19, 29% were 19, and 20% were between the ages of 20 and 22; 57% were female and 43% male; 60% were Hispanic, 26% Black or African American, 10% White, and 5% Asian or Pacific Islander. The percentage of students awarded need-based financial aid was 71% (Guttman Community College, n.d.a). Students enter the college with an average high-school grade-point average of 75% (C average), and are required to enroll in three first-year courses in the first semester: City Seminar, Statistics, and Ethnographies of Work. As is the case with most community colleges, a large number of entering freshmen at CUNY are in need of "remediation" as documented by the Office of Institutional Research (2015).

> More than one-half of all first-time freshmen entering CUNY in fall 2014 were assigned to remedial instruction in at least one subject (57%), typically in math. Remediation is especially prevalent in associate degree programs, where 81% of freshmen are assigned to some remediation.

At the outset, however, GCC faculty, staff, and administration committed to creating a model for developmental education that embedded the needed skill development into college-level courses. GCC accomplishes remediation through an approach in which additional contact hours are built into first-year courses to help students work on reading, writing, and quantitative skills. Whether or not they earned passing scores on their assessment tests upon enrollment, all students are placed randomly in two first-year courses: City Seminar and Ethnographies of Work. City Seminar I, a freshman course with 10.5 weekly contact hours for 3 credits, provides the focal point for skill-building for all students, no matter their proficiency status. This allows developmental students to complete their first year with the same credits earned as other students. This paper describes the remediation approach implemented at GCC since the college's conceptualization (in 2008) and implementation (2012) and shares key data for three cohorts of students—those who entered in 2012, 2013, and 2014—and attained proficiency while earning college credits to advance to their major courses. Retention data show that more students who are proficient at the end of the academic year are retained in the subsequent fall than those students who were not assessed as proficient. [1]

By entering community college on par with proficient students, non-proficient students are positioned for success from the outset of their college education. As some research has indicated, requiring students to complete developmental coursework prior to taking college-level courses can too often lead to a "narrative of failure" for many students (Long & Boatman, 2013; Pierce, 2015). At GCC, all entering students are given an intentional first-year experience (FYE) that allows them to earn 24-30 credits. Those students who did not pass the reading and writing assessment tests upon entering the college are provided the opportunity to prepare to retake the tests during this first year (Guttman Community College, n.d.b).

This strengths-based approach to coursework is coupled with a faculty devoted to providing differentiated instruction to each student. This high-touch, high-support model allows students to experience learning as a trajectory with curricular and co-curricular opportunities focused on skill building. Importantly, "Guttman's curriculum hits all of the hallmarks outlined in Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins's (2015) guided pathways model, incorporating systematic and collaborative learning facilitation design as a nexus for innovation and student success" (Blake, 2015).

According to Brown and Kurzweil (2016), GCC is utilizing best practices to ensure that students have the opportunity to thrive. One of these best practices is the intensive summer bridge program students attend prior to the start of their first semester, during which they practice the skills they will use in their first-year coursework, as well as meet their future faculty and advisors. Another key feature in GCC's first year is that students are placed in learning communities comprised of 75 students with a faculty member from English, mathematics, and the social science; a librarian; or an advisor assigned to each student for the entire first year. Each learning community also has graduate student coordinators who facilitate a component of City Seminar. Other best practices include mandatory full-time enrollment, combined academic and student support services, a guided pathway approach to courses, limited majors, utilization of ePortfolios to capture metacognitive learning and reflective practice, embedded support, applied learning pedagogy, opportunities for service learning and experiential activities, and a continu-

ous calendar of four sessions for students to advance their learning without interruption (Weinbaum, Rodriguez, & Bauer-Maglin, n.d.). For instance, the 2014 cohort started the 12-week Fall I cycle on September 4, after completing the required 10-day Summer Bridge (August 18-29). During the 6-week Fall II, beginning on January 4, 2015, students were able to progress with coursework, retake classes they did not successfully complete during Fall I, or take an intensive practicum in preparation for retaking the CUNY assessment tests. Spring I and Spring II followed the same 12-6-week cycle pattern. Figure 1 provides a snapshot of the First Year Experience as envisioned by the GCC FYE Steering Committee.

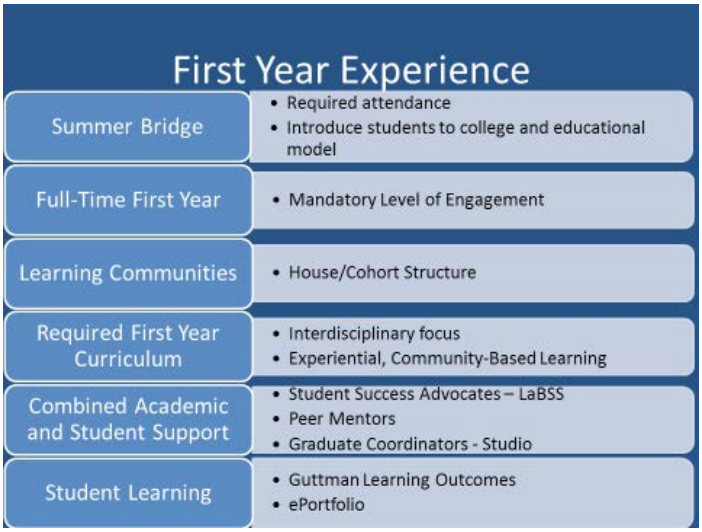

Figure 1. First Year Experience components[2]

The college thus creates an affirming environment, complete with extensive advisement and student support, as well as skilled faculty prepared to offer scaffolded approaches to meet course learning outcomes. The required City Seminar, offered in two parts during Fall I and Spring I of the FYE, is an example of this approach. City Seminar I is divided into four components: Critical Issue I (3 hours), Reading and Writing (3 hours), Quantitative Reasoning (3 hours), and Studio (1.5 hours)[3]. The course is the anchor for the learning communities and the primary space where embedded remediation occurs in the first semester. The course provides extended time-on-task for students who are not proficient in reading, writing, and/or mathematics. Each course component provides opportunities for students to practice literacy, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning skills. The course is team-taught by three faculty members and supported by a graduate coordinator who facilitates studio.

The official course description reads:

> City Seminar I emerges from the field of urban studies and takes a comparative, multidisciplinary approach to introduce students to complex global issues such as sustainability, global economic development, and social and environmental justice. Following a critical research model, the course challenges students to examine the historical, cultural, and social contexts of urban problems; to gather and analyze evidence from multiple stakeholders and perspectives; and to propose evidence-based solutions in written, oral, and digital media formats. While each offering of the course features a specific theme, every City Seminar I builds on students' prior knowledge of the distinctive character, institutions, and socio-economic composition of New York City. To deepen students' understanding of urban life around the world, the City's physical, social, environmental, and political realities are situated in relation to other urban centers. Through its emphasis on evaluating the unevenly distributed consequences of local, national, and international policies and practices, the course equips students with the skills to conduct thoughtful, critical analyses and to develop actionable proposals responsive to specific urban circumstances. (Guttman First Year Experience Steering Committee, 2015)

Students are expected to meet the following learning outcomes (Guttman FYE Steering Committee, 2013a):

1. Describe the field of urban studies and its primary objects of study, fundamental questions, and core research strategies.
2. Demonstrate understanding of major international urban centers, including New York City, from social, cultural, historical and political perspectives.
3. Identify, interpret, and assess the perspectives of multiple stakeholders in different parts of the world on critical urban issues and evaluate the evidence supporting each position.
4. Demonstrate understanding of the policy-making process and the relative effects of policies on urban development and urban life in view of geographic, environmental, cultural and political realities.
5. Make judgments and draw conclusions based on quantitative analysis of data, while also articulating the limits of this analysis.
6. Identify and utilize key information resources in order to analyze issues and develop solutions that are responsive to specific urban circumstances.
7. Analyze differences in development and approaches to practical and policy issues undertaken in different parts of the world based on the experiences of those regions.
8. Work independently and collaboratively on classroom assignments, projects and oral presentations.
9. Present evidence-based proposals for solutions to

contemporary urban problems in written, oral, and digital media formats

Crucial to the City Seminar I curriculum are the integrated assignments that allow students to apply and connect the skills they are learning across the different components of the course. These integrated assignments are modeled on problem-based inquiry approaches and learning strategies applied to a specific theme. Themes thus far have ranged from food justice to immigration.

Embedded remediation is accomplished through the integrated skills "spines" of the course. Table 1 demonstrates excerpts of the targeted approach to skill-building, allowing students to grasp, assess, and apply large theoretical concepts in the context of the theme (Guttman FYE Steering Committee, 2013b). In the integrated skills spines, students simultaneously acquire and develop essential skills in reading and writing, quantitative reasoning, and dealing with critical issues. In addition, these skills are practiced in studio, a space for applied learning and reflection. In reading and writing, students practice and hone foundational skills, such as annotating, summarizing, note-taking, and identifying main ideas, audience, voice, purpose, and structure. These skills are later developed through lessons on formulating a research question, thesis development, organization of ideas, revision, and peer

Table 1. Draft: City Seminar I Skills Calendar

Week		Critical Issue	Quantitative Reasoning	Reading & Writing
Week 1	ACTIVITY	Introduction to concepts: mobility, accessibility, sustainability, equity	Reading and organizing data	Interacting with texts: annotate, summarize, identify main points
	SKILLS	- Understand self in relation to society - Draw connections between scales	- Count, Classify and Categorize - Identify difficulties in obtaining accurate counts	- Identify main idea and supporting evidence - Summarize texts - Practice note-taking
Week 4	ACTIVITY	Concepts: Interrelation of race, poverty, education, wealth. Relationship between material and social difference (*the core of the second cycle*).	Create visual representations of data. Use technologies to represent data and one's interpretation of data.	Organize content and ideas in relation to a thesis. Ask and answer questions about what you are reading and what you are writing.
	SKILLS	- Define and analyze inequalities in society - Identify context and perspective of various stakeholders in a given situation	- Observe and represent trends in data - Communicate one's interpretation of data	- Formulate questions about texts - Develop a thesis statement and carry it through an essay
Week 9	CONTENT	Understand policies in different places and interpret their effects. Concepts: policy, equity	Begin to represent data to tell a story that will become the infographic.	Organize evidence and begin to draft policy proposal.
	SKILLS	- Identify discipline-specific conventions (i.e. policy) - Engage in quantitative and qualitative approaches to research	- Determine appropriateness of ways of presenting data - Analyze and utilize data to present a critical argument	- Apply understanding of paragraph and essay structure in formal writing - Use evidence to support arguments
Week 10	CONTENT	Continue with research and begin to plan final policy proposal presentation.	Complete infographic project this week.	Peer review of drafts.
	SKILLS	- Evaluate research sources according to applicability and reliability - Analyze and utilize data to present a critical argument	- Articulate mathematical processes orally and in writing - Communicate interpretations of data	- Engage in peer review and revision - Incorporate quotations/citations from other sources in own writing

(Guttman FYE Steering Committee, 2013b)

review. Similarly, students learn how to read, collect, classify, and organize data, and use estimation in quantitative reasoning. While developing their number sense and proportional reasoning, students also break down large conceptual frameworks by evaluating case studies through historical and contemporary lenses.

For instance, during week 4, when students identify stakeholders in Critical Issue, they also parse trends in data and learn how to interpret these in Quantitative Reasoning. In Reading and Writing, students formulate theses extrapolated from the readings and data from the other two courses while deciding how to frame the theses in a first paper that synthesizes the ideas presented in all courses. In week 9, when students learn about discipline-specific conventions in Critical Issue, they also focus on essay structure and using evidence to create effective paragraphs theme (Guttman FYE Steering Committee, 2013b). The rhythm of each course component is critical to the success of all the units because of the integrated nature of building transferrable reading and writing skills within City Seminar's contextualized, thematic setting. Faculty work intimately to ensure that each portion of the course progresses towards the signature assignments. Weekly team meetings are critical to ensure that faculty deliver on time pedagogical approaches, and that all obstacles to student success are addressed (Blake, 2015).

Early data from Guttman's Center for College Effectiveness (CCE) shows that the impact of the integrated first-year curriculum is positive. Though it is difficult to determine which elements or best practices lead to direct increase in proficiency status, it is clear that the impact of the holistic approach has produced positive results. From a preliminary evaluation of two cohorts, there is some evidence of City Seminar's impact: "for both the fall 2012 and fall 2013 cohorts, a majority of underprepared students became proficient in writing (56% and 53%, respectively) and reading (51% and 56%, respectively), by the end of their first complete fall semester" (Hertz, 2014). Student performance at the end of completion of the required first semester first-year courses show that both proficient and non-proficient students (in the mixed blend model) achieve course learning outcomes at a positive rate. [4]

When students do not reach proficiency by the end of the Fall I cycle, they have an opportunity to take a Critical Reading and Writing Practicum and one other credit-bearing course, usually Arts in New York City, Biology, Chemistry, or a course that completes their core requirements (Guttman Community College, n.d.b). Designed by the liberal arts and sciences coordinator and two English faculty members in Fall II 2012, the Critical Reading and Writing Practicum is a 36-hour immersion in learning how to decode texts, think analytically, and represent ideas in a coherent format. The course builds on the skills that students learn in City Seminar. This intensive reading and writing course engages cross-cultural analysis of contemporary issues affecting the United States and the rest of the world. Students focus on argument construction, coherence, making relevant connections, and the use of writing which help to shape our supporting ideas. Students hone and develop skills such as juxtaposing and contrasting ideas, transitions, paraphrasing, and using quotations, while making a clear distinction between an author's opinion and their own. Although taking the practicum is required for students who need to retake the CUNY assessment test in reading and/or writing, the course is not a test prep course.

The learning outcomes expected of students completing the course are to:

1. Analyze and make connections across texts through strategies such as note taking, annotation, paraphrasing, and summarizing.
2. Access, evaluate, and synthesize information resources to support claims they make in their writing.
3. Formulate original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others.
4. Explain their writing process and employ strategies for revision and improvement of their written work based on awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses as writers.

These key learning outcomes represent transportable skills that are necessary for success in City Seminar II (the second course in the City Seminar series), Composition I, introductory major courses, and second-year courses. Students who may need to retake City Seminar I also benefit from working on these foundational and critical skills in the practicum. Data for two cohorts show that the majority of the students who enter the college non-proficient in reading (26% in 2012, 27% in 2013) and writing (29% in 2012, 26% in 2013), become proficient by the end of their first year at GCC. "With reading, the fall 2012 and fall 2013 cohorts each increased 18 percentage points from the start of the first fall semester to the end of the first year. With writing, the fall 2012 and fall 2013 cohorts increased 19 and 15 percentage points, respectively" (Hertz, 2014). In addition to gaining proficiency in reading and writing by the end of City Seminar I, or the Critical Reading and Writing Practicum, these students also progressed through the first-year curriculum, a trajectory supported by research on similar remediation models, collectively known as Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP) (Cho, Kopko, Jenkins, & Jaggars, 2012; Jenkins, Speroni, Belfield, Jaggars, & Edgecombe, 2010).

GCC is also intentional in how it serves English Language Learners (ELL). The college recognized that some of these students would remain non-proficient after taking City Seminar I and the practicum. Therefore, the college piloted two models for students who were still non-proficient in Spring I of their first year. The first model was a 4.5-hour Composition I for all non-proficient students and the second model was a free-standing 1.5-hour practicum in addition to Composition I. The main difference between the models is that students in the latter take Composition I with the learning community to which they are assigned during Summer Bridge, a mix of proficient and non-proficient students. Non-proficient students are not identified as such within the classroom, which is comprised predominantly of proficient students. The 1.5-hour practicum, taught by a full-time instructor, is a truncated, 18-hour version of the 36-hour practicum that meets during a 6-week cycle; however, the learning outcomes are the same. The critical component of the success of this design is keeping students in their learning community, and not putting all failing students together in composition. To further support this, the college administration works to ensure that the practicum is taught by a full-time faculty member to maintain consistency in curriculum delivery.

Pairing the practicum with Composition I allows students to advance towards their degree requirements while gaining the skills needed to read and write critically, which subverts the attrition and ineffectiveness that has characterized traditional remedial education (Long & Boatman, 2013; Pierce, 2015). Students are tested for reading and writing proficiency at midterm and at the end of the cycle as CUNY policy holds that they cannot earn a passing grade in Composition I if they have not passed the proficiency exam. Failure to pass affects students' ability to proceed with their course of study and therefore negatively impacts student persistence and retention.

Research shows that non-proficient students who take standard classes with proficient students benefit from the differentiated learning environment and "consistently performed better than similar students who took the highest level developmental course before enrolling in college-level English" (Cho, et al., 2012, p. 25). The integration of the non-proficient students in proficient-level Composition I, an alternative remediation practice known as "mainstreaming," has shown increasing success at GCC, mirroring the success of this model at the Community College of Baltimore County (Cho, et al., 2012).

The early data from the 2012, 2013, and 2014 cohorts at GCC illustrate that embedded remediation is effective in direct skill-building and the application of college-level proficiencies in the context of a highly integrated, thematic first-year curriculum. Specifically, the skill-building has focused on reading, writing and quantitative reasoning. Beyond course grades and cumulative reports of first-year success, student learning is assessed through faculty review on the mandatory assessment days built into the academic calendar, where student work is randomly selected and faculty use a norming process to assess whether course and program learning outcomes are being achieved at benchmark or beyond. Post-graduation surveys are also being conducted to gather whether students felt prepared for writing, reading, and quantitative analysis post GCC.[5] While this preliminary analysis does not capture the students who drop out and remain non-proficient, it does indicate support for the success of GCC's embedded remediation model in facilitating the successful attainment of proficiency within the first year. Early data on post GCC enrollment continue to be promising, although it is too soon to be fully assessed.[6]

Endnotes

1 See student retention data and proficiency status by cohort at https://guttman-cuny.digication.com/idea/retention

2 Learning about Being a Successful Student (LaBSS) is a weekly 1.5 hour advisement session linked to Ethnographies of Work. The course is taught by the advisor assigned to the cohort and addresses soft skills and career exploration.

3 Studio is a mandatory 1.5 hour embedded space where students can practice the skills they are learning in City Seminar. Studio is facilitated by Graduate Coordinators who help students to work on their integrated City Seminar assignments and projects. The Graduate Coordinator is part of the student learning community.

4 See summative report of student academic performance by course and proficiency status at https://guttman-cuny.digication.com/idea/academics

5 These results can be found at https://guttman-cuny.digication.com/idea/Graduates

6 See summative report of 2014 graduates at https://guttman-cuny.digication.com/idea/Graduates

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Academic English and Language-Related Technology

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Utilizing the framework of educational linguistics, we investigate ways to foster greater awareness of, and facility with, academic English for educators and students across disciplines by maximizing the popularity of language-related software packages, applications and websites, those already commonly found in and out of the classroom. Our work examines such technology to uncover assumptions made about language by these programs and thereby heightening meta-linguistic knowledge for educators and students, an awareness that can lead to more reflective and informed teaching and learning with–and about–academic English. At a time of growing linguistic diversity in our classrooms, and with the expanded pedagogical use of technology in higher education, linguistics and technology need to join forces.

Two Growing Trends in the Higher Education Classroom: Linguistic Diversity and Technology-Based Pedagogy

Academic English (also called academic discourse and academic register) is the required form of English in higher education, one largely founded on Standard English (Behrens, 2014; Zwiers, 2008). However, there are many obstacles to fluency that students face when they enter college. Primarily, academic English is a type of "invisible criterion," for it is rarely taught, or even overtly discussed (Zwiers, 2008). Therefore, students must conform to a type of English that is not well defined for them. In fact, Behrens, Johnson, Allard, and Caroli (in press) fault instructors for working on a type of "I know it when I see it" approach when they evaluate how academic is the writing of college students.

Another obstacle facing students is that academic English is not a form of English spoken or written outside of the world of education, i.e., no one really uses it at home (Snow & Uccelli, 2009; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Students enrolled in developmental English courses, then, confront a form of English that might well seem unfamiliar, even unnatural (cf. Clark, 2013). Finally, academic English differs in substantial ways from the language that students are expected to produce in high school (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, & McGill, 2008). Both may be based on Standard English, but higher education demands a denser syntax with, for example, more embedded clauses; a higher degree of explicitness; more formal vocabulary; and specialized, often Greek or Latin-based terms (Swales, 2001; Wilkinson & Silliman, 2012).

To complicate the picture, today's college students represent a greater range of English diversity than ever before: more varieties of accents, dialects, and discourse traits (Behrens & Mercer, 2011; Behrens & Sperling, 2010; Canagarajah, 2006; Horner & Trimbur, 2002). With students using more varied speech and syntax, one would think that the bias toward Standard English in higher education would be called into question. Standard English, however, continues to remain the unchallenged model for the English used in academia (Schleppegrell, 2012; Zwiers, 2008).

Behrens (2012) addresses this problem in higher education, claiming that all professors (and students) should have a more overt (metalinguistic) awareness of English as it relates to the nature of academic discourse. Further, Reaser (2010) argues that the principles of linguistics should be incorporated into college classrooms beyond those in composition or English, such as courses in the social sciences.

Our work applies linguistic principles to the study of student learning. Specifically, we adhere to the mission of linguistics to uncover speakers' internal knowledge of the structure and use of language, including the grammar of non-standard dialects (e.g., Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011). Further, as do educational linguists, we acknowledge that our work resides in a real world context (education) that values a particular dialect of English over others (Green, 2009; Lindblom, 2006). We believe a more overt, metalinguistic approach to teaching about the English expected in college would be beneficial to all students. The goal here is to approach academic English from a more overt understanding of how language works. To help achieve this goal, we further believe that faculty can make good use of the comfortable placement of technology in our lives, both social and pedagogical (Fillion, Limayem, Laferriere & Mantha, 2009). Many technologies that are commonly available for smart phones, tablets, and laptops are being employed as both teaching tools and research

and study tools used by our students (Lotherington & Ronda, 2012). This agenda of heightened linguistic awareness can, we believe, be pursued using language technology familiar to both teachers and learners.

Our work, then, exploits the intersection of two movements: a rise in linguistic diversity in higher education (with the added call for awareness of this diversity and of language in general), and the infusion of technology into our daily lives (both in and out of the classroom) to address the need for fluency in academic English. We believe that now is a perfect time for a linguistic exploration of that technology, especially of programs related to language. We can harness students' comfort level with technology and simultaneously explore how Standard English is represented, all from a metalinguistic view, with the aim of more informed teaching and learning.

Language Technology: Where is the Bias?

Squires and Queen (2011) offer a pedagogical model of employing technology to make many all-too subjective assumptions about language behavior more objective, specifically exploring social media and popular culture via linguistic tools. For example, they use speech analysis software with their students to test and challenge stereotypes of pitch patterns in gay male speech, compare grammatical structures of African American English as represented in films to data from linguistic research, and analyze Spanish language influence on English in the speech of popular Latino(a) performers.

The benefits of technology can be wider-reaching than we might realize. Munson and Babel (2002) use acoustic analysis on voices of those identifying as LGBT, moving beyond the stereotype of a single voice pitch pattern to signal identity. Cook (2004) believes that language-based technology "alters the way we interact as social beings," arguing for a more accepting society by uncovering and questioning language stereotypes (105).

Similar to the work above, we explore the relationship between language-based technology and the concept of academic English. Specifically, our work examines ways that this technology in education can uncover assumptions about Standard English (the basis of academic discourse) that are often left unspoken. We are interested in the extent to which current technology creates and reinforces standards that go unchallenged, i.e., prescriptive rules that have not kept pace with the rise of English dialects in the classroom, nor with the natural changes that occur in any language form.

We ask the following questions: What assumptions are made by this technology about correct and incorrect English? How can linguistically-based pedagogy move students toward a more informed place in order to master academic English (without losing their own language identity)? And can we make current language-based technology work for us as educators? We posit that the technology, far from being the means to, and measure of, an objective depiction of Standard English, is itself largely biased and perpetuates a rigid view of language, one not only unhelpful but potentially harmful to a student's mastery of academic discourse. Thus, we employ our linguistic training to evaluate various tablet and smart phone applications and computer software packages that are currently used by educators and students as sources of authority, to assess what is "correct" standard English in both grammar and mechanics, such as punctuation. Such exploration can lead to more overt awareness of the language demanded in higher education, which in turn can lead to deeper teaching and learning.

In terms of technology, we ask:

What grammatical patterns are considered correct?

What messages about grammar are students receiving from their technology, and how binary (right vs. wrong) is the nature of those messages?

(NB: This study is part of a larger exploration that includes speech/accent related-technology.)

Our hypothesis is that language-based technology fosters a prescriptive view of linguistic correctness; yet, it can be the very basis of an exploration and lesson in academic discourse. The workings of this technology can generate discussions, lead to comparison/contrast exercises across English dialects, and supply examples of the type of English deemed "correct" in order to explore it more closely. Both students and educators can be more empowered with this linguistic understanding.

Methodology I

Investigating Common Grammatical Errors

Instruments and Stimuli

To test how grammatical patterns are treated by grammar checking programs, we used four popular ones: GingerSoftware, Microsoft Word, GrammarBase, and PaperRater. These programs scan documents for grammatical patterns and determine what is correct and incorrect in the sentence structure.

We first introduced eight sentences, each containing one of the top eight non-standard grammatical patterns most often corrected by teachers on student papers, as reported by Noguchi (1991); see below. See Appendix A for test sentences. Note that some "errors" are those of mechanics, that is, punctuation issues.

- Run-on sentences
- Passive voice
- Sentence fragment
- Subject-verb agreement error
- Misused comma
- Misused apostrophe
- Misused period
- Which/that confusion

We tested each sentence, in writing, with each grammar checker program.

Results

Table 1 shows responses to these sentences by the four grammar checkers. A check mark in a box indicates that a grammar structure was detected as an error. The "revision" notation in a box means that the program provided its own "correct" version of what was deemed an error.

Our results demonstrate inconsistency in the different programs as to what is considered correct versus incorrect grammar. Looking by program, we find that no program identified all sentences as containing errors. MS Word came closest, flagging five out of eight sentences. Looking by error type, we find that a missing apostrophe was flagged the most often, by three of the four programs. A misplaced comma was next, flagged by two of the four programs. When a program offered a revision, it was into the standard form. Structures that were purely syntactic (i.e., passive, subject/verb agreement, and which/that substitution) seemed to be flagged slightly less often than those of mechanics.

Students who look to such technology to shape their academic writing are thus receiving inconsistent messages. While Noguchi (1991) notes that the run-on sentence is the structure most corrected by educators, it was not detected at all by these four programs as being non-standard.

Methodology II

Investigating Grammar of Non-Standard English Dialect

We next tested grammatical patterns found in a non-standard dialect of English.

Instruments and Stimuli

To test how a particular non-standard dialect of English is treated by these same programs, we tested grammatical patterns found in the most studied non-standard English dialect, African American English (AAE) (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2002). Below are six constructions we obtained from a text on non-standard grammatical forms. See Appendix B for test sentences. (Note that all of these structures are syntactic, not irregularities of mechanics.)

- Multiple negation
- Use of past participle for simple past tense verb
- Additional preposition
- Deletion of helping verb in progressive tense
- Omission of third person singular 's' marker on helping verb
- Omission of third person singular 's' marker on main verb

Results

Table 2 shows our results. A check mark indicates that a program detected an error. We see from our data that programs were inconsistent when determining what syntactic patterns were considered incorrect. Looking by program, Ginger flagged the most sentences (five out of six), while GrammarBase flagged no sentences as having grammar errors. Looking by grammatical structure, sen-

Table 1. Responses to Sentence Errors with Four Grammar Checkers

	Run-On Sentence	Passive	Fragment	Sub→Verb Agreement	Comma	Apostrophe	Period	Which vs. That
Ginger gingersoftware.com					✓	✓		
MSWord Microsoft Office 2010: Microsoft Word			✓	✓		✓R	✓R	✓R
Grammar Base grammarbase.com		✓						
Paper Rater paperrater.com (powered by Ginger)*					✓	✓		

✓ – Program detected a grammatical error
R – Suggestion was provided to correct the error

tences with multiple negation, helping verb omission and uninflected helping verb were flagged by more programs than were the other constructions. Uninflected third person singular present tense was flagged the least, by only one program. No one particular error was detected by all programs, largely due to GrammarBase's acceptance of all structures. All revisions changed the sentences to the same Standard English form.

Further, comparing data in Table 2 to Table 1, we see that AAE structures are called into question more often, by more programs, than the prior set of sentences containing a mix of syntactic and mechanical irregularities. Three verb phrase constructions in our AAE data--past participle for simple past, helping verb omission, and absence of third person 's'—are similar to the subject/verb agreement error of Table 1. The AAE constructions were flagged 50%, 75%, and 25% of the time (respectively) as errors; the corresponding error in the first set of sentences was only singled out by one program. We take note that the same error seems to be considered more linguistically irregular when represented in the context of AAE.

These two analyses of grammar show that the four grammar checking programs overall demonstrate inconsistency in noting grammar errors. In addition, each takes an all-or-none, right-or-wrong approach, failing to capture or convey the nuances of dialectal differences, without allowing students to understand the reason behind a determination, i.e., offering no explanation. Students, who often rely on such technology to "smooth out" their grammar for academic assignments, thus receive mixed messages about what is grammatical.

Limitations

Our study has the following limitations. First, we did not examine all grammar checkers on the market. And of those we did include, software is periodically updated, so our results are specific to these versions. Secondly, we did not examine other dialects of English beyond AAE. Nor did we investigate less common grammar issues or other aspects of language such as speech patterns. Further research can explore such mechanics as spelling via Word's spell check system and autocorrect programs. Finally, in our motivation for this project, we assume that most students have access to, and make use of, these language-related technologies. Given a continuing digital divide, however, in this country, such an assumption might be an overstatement (Baron, 2008).

Conclusion

In general, language technology demonstrates a good deal of inconsistency related to grammatical variation. While the grammar of Standard English might be a hallmark of academic discourse, and the consequences for a student using non-standard grammar severe, four popular grammar checkers demonstrated a great deal of variation in their criteria of correctness. These findings suggest a failure of technology to validate linguistic variation, especially with written English grammar associated with academic usage.

Grammar checkers have been found wanting in previous investigations. McGee and Ericsson (2002) show a programmed bias against the passive voice to the point of absurdity with the checker in Microsoft Word: The sentence *Bill was left on the side of the road* is "corrected" to *The side of the road left Bill* (459). Zuber and Reed (1993), over 20 years ago, questioned the authority of the premier technology at the time—grammars—saying that they "promote rules of standardization outside the students' linguistic experience" (p. 518), and are too concerned with preserving language forms, as opposed to being "responsive to the variety and growth in a language" (p. 527).

Table 2 Responses to Non-Standard Dialect Errors with Four Grammar Checkers

	Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6
Multiple negation: She doesn't want none.						
Use of past participle: I been here.						
Additional Preposition: Where is the house at?						
Helping Verb Omission: They gonna be there.						
Uninflected Helping Verb: It do make sense.						
Uninflected Present Tense: She walk to the store.						
Ginger gingersoftware.com	✓R	✓R		✓R	✓R	✓R
MSWord Microsoft Office 2010: Microsoft Word	✓R		✓R	✓R	✓R	
Grammar Base grammarbase.com						
Paper Rater paperrater.com (powered by Ginger)*	✓R	✓R		✓R	✓R	

✓ – Program detected a grammatical error
R – Suggestion was provided to correct the error

Is today's market of apps and software any better than "authoritative" handbooks, though? Our results suggest that students will obtain from this technology information that is contradictory. Further, some structures flagged as errors actually occur in students' own speech. Thus, students' voices are not being validated (or are being revised) by technology, with no opportunity for discussion or explanation. Where, then, do students turn? To whom do they look as language authorities? Many academic publications (ironically) might not offer good writing models. Cox (2009) considers much academic discourse to be unnecessarily dense. Graff (2003) faults academics for producing prose that sounds intelligent but is actually empty. Again, where do our students turn for models and guidance?

Language technology can play a vital role in higher education by increasing metalinguistic awareness—in both students and teachers. Such an exploration is important because "youth are the vanguard of linguistic changes resulting from new technologies" (Cook, 2004: 109). Our students are leading the way in language and technology use; the more informed those students are about academic English, the better their odds of mastering the discourse and minimizing frustration. Of course, being fluent in technology does not mean one is a critical user of that technology (Lotherington & Ronda, 2012). Teachers need to explore and exploit the intersection of language use and technology in the educational setting, side by side with students. Technology can be put to better use in terms of academic English. That is the next challenge for educators.

Educational Application

The necessity of mastering academic English is a given for today's students. However, the invisible criteria of its nature can be made more visible (Zwiers, 2008). Such an endeavor allows for many classroom exercises, all of which allow educators (jointly with students) to explore and question the nature of what is deemed grammatically correct. Instead of introducing a new layer of unchallenged criteria to students assimilating to higher education, the technology can be the basis of lessons in meta-linguistic awareness.

Dunn and Lindblom (2011) pursue such an agenda in their book *Grammar Rants*. They make linguistic bias itself the basis of lessons and allow students to see the data behind assumptions of grammatical correctness. In addition, students can keep error logs, specifically recording their own aptitude with academic English using Noguchi's (1991) common error patterns. Lessons can be devised for students to compare and contrast results found across different language-related technology, and to what current usage handbooks report about academic English. They can survey their professors to tease out the subjective nature of academic style (i.e., What is personal preference vs. a rule?). Issues of what constitutes a linguistic expert can be raised and applied to courses with a research component. How does one validate a source? Ultimately, we hope that conversations happen, dialogues between students and teachers, as well as between users and their technology.

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Appendix A: Top eight grammatical errors, sentences tested, with given revisions

Run On: I love to write papers I would write one every day if I had the time.

Passive: The entire highway was paved by the crew.

Fragment: The entire stretch of highway.

Subject-Verb Agreement: The ball roll across the floor.

Which vs. That: Diamonds, that are expensive, often elicit forgiveness.

Comma: In principle these, although they were arranged differently, these sentences have the same meaning.

Period: I am going home

Apostrophe: They went to the boys house.

Revisions from MS Word

Sentence tested: I am going home

Sentence revised: I am going home.

Sentence tested: They went to the boys house.

Sentence revised: They went to the boy's house.

Sentence tested: Diamonds, that are expensive, often elicit forgiveness.

Sentence revised: Diamonds, which are expensive, often elicit forgiveness.

Appendix B: AAE sentences tested, with given revisions

Sentence 1: "She doesn't want none."

Ginger revision: She doesn't want any.

MS Word revision : She doesn't want any.

Paper Rater revision: She doesn't want any.

Sentence 2: "I been here for two hours."

Ginger revision: I have been here for two hours.

Paper Rater revision: I have been here for two hours.

Sentence 3: "Where is the house at?"

MS Word revision: Where is the house?

Sentence 4: "They gonna be there."

Ginger revision: They are going to be there.

MS Word revision: They are going to be there.

Paper Rater version: They are going to be there.

Sentence 5: "It do make sense."

Ginger revision: It does make sense.

MS Word revision: It does make sense.

Paper Rater revision: It does make sense.

Sentence 6: She walk to the store

Ginger revision: She walks to the store.

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Take a Breath: Yoga and Meditation in the Developmental Classroom

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Teachers of developmental education are familiar with non-traditional students who are balancing innumerate stressors in their lives, in addition to the overwhelming stress of college. Stress relief methods like yoga and meditation are essential life management tools in helping new college students succeed, not only in their education but also in their careers and personal lives. When incorporated into a first-year seminar class, yoga and meditation can offer students healthy stress relief in order to successfully pursue their academic goals, in addition to offering lifelong stress management.

Yoga and meditation have enjoyed increasing popularity in the United States as stress relief methods and alternate forms of spirituality. Recently, mindfulness methods like yoga and meditation have found a place in health care centers, businesses and even schools. I use yoga and meditation in a first year seminar course at the community college where I teach, and I've seen many positive results.

For the fifteen years I've been in the classroom, I've seen my students struggle with stress management, time management and grit. At the community college where I teach, there are two campuses that attract different types of students (one is more urban and diverse, whereas the other is more homogeneous and traditional). Both populations are full of young adults and not-so-young adults who are trying to balance too much at once: children, jobs, classes, and social lives. What they all seem to have in common is the need for a toolbox of management skills necessary for that kind of balancing act. I teach my students in developmental classes how to create schedules, how important sleep is, how taking fewer classes might mean more success for them as students. Some listen, and most do not, because they cannot see immediate results.

A few years ago, as I was struggling professionally with these issues, I was working on my own stress by practicing yoga. Eventually, I became a yoga teacher and am in the process of becoming a professional yoga therapist. It was not until one fateful day that I discovered my professional and personal lives were about to meet: in a first-year experience class, I was teaching about the stress response, as I always do, when I realized that the yoga and meditation I teach outside the classroom directly affected the stress response and could fit seamlessly into the lesson. On a whim, I led the class through a short, seated yoga sequence and meditation. That moment started me on a path to find a way to incorporate mindfulness into all my classes.

What is yoga?

Yoga can be many things to many people. It is ancient and has many roots. I study yoga as an ancient system of life management that includes physical poses (asanas) that were designed to prepare the body for meditation. The earliest yogis struggled to stay still during long periods of meditation so they developed the asana to stretch the physical body, distribute energy throughout the body and warm up in preparation for the stillness required during meditation. Many people in the West are familiar with the physical poses they may see at a yoga class in their gym. Some are even familiar with meditation, either through personal practice or a led practice. For many people who study yoga, the eight limbs of yoga will lead to nirvana. Those limbs include the physical poses, meditation, guidelines for living that require the followers to be non-harming and compassionate. Others just want a good workout!

What is the stress response?

All of us have a hormonal stress response designed to protect us from danger. Sometimes referred to as the "flight or fight" response, the stress response is a way of preparing our bodies to perform quickly or strongly in moments of grave danger. When danger is sensed, cortisol is released throughout the body to slow digestion, increase heart rate and blood pressure, and shut down any non-essential organ function while the heart and lungs get ready to act. This response is exactly what we need to escape a hungry bear or lift our children out of a sinking car. Our bodies, however, do not always know the difference between a hungry bear or a traffic jam. The hormonal response is the same, and in our modern, stressful lives, some of us are constantly in a state of stress emergency. Our sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are meant to work in concert and in balance. When they do not, we start to feel the physical manifestations of stress: high blood pressure, digestive issues, depression, and sleep interruptions. The parasympathetic nervous system keeps those symptoms in check, and practices such as

yoga and meditation directly and immediately trigger the parasympathetic nervous system.

Yoga in the Classroom

I am certainly not the first person to use yoga and meditation in the classroom. There are educators using yoga and meditation in their classrooms, and researchers studying the effects of a regular yoga practice built into the school day. In an article published in *Teaching Tolerance*, Lisa Ann Williamson describes an elementary school teacher in Atlanta who used yoga to tame her chaotic third-graders. Chelsea Jackson taught her students a few poses and simple breathing exercises and found positive results including "fewer fights and arguments among students; better student decision making; increased self-awareness and self-esteem; improved concentration and retention; and more efficient use of class time" (Williamson, 2013). In the same article, Williamson introduces Tara Guber, who started a school-wide yoga initiative in her Los Angeles school and found that after offering yoga to students three times a week, the teachers recognized that the best time to test students was immediately after yoga practice, when they could be guaranteed "calm, relaxed—but focused—students" (Williamson, 2013).

Lisa Morgan, a language acquisition teacher, has used yoga in second language acquisition for many years, citing the natural connection between yoga poses and the Total Physical Response method of learning a language. Moving the body while learning vocabulary can trigger a stronger response from the brain, and yoga lends itself naturally to that process. Morgan says, "it was clear that the class in which I taught English through yoga was more fun and relaxing than the traditional class, not only for the students but also for me, the teacher" (Morgan, 2015).

Sat Khalsa is a teacher and researcher at Harvard Medical School who has studied the effects of yoga and meditation on children, adolescents, and adults in both school settings and professional settings. In one of his studies, he offered yoga classes to adolescents in a secondary school and compared those students to others who took traditional physical education classes. Some anecdotal evidence from students who participated in the yoga classes that show positive improvements include students feeling a relaxing effect of the yoga, being able to cope with stress more effectively, an improvement in mood, and feeling more centered (Khalsa, 2016).

Methodology

Many of my colleagues ask how I implement yoga and meditation on top of the many and varied other responsibilities we have in the classroom—namely curriculum! Some schools are using the already existing physical education space, and others are carving out time during class. I primarily use the first few moments of class to center and focus my students using a few poses and breathing exercises. Students remain seated the whole time, so we can work within the confines of any classroom setting. In the past, I've used the first few minutes of class to give a writing prompt as a way to focus energies (I am a writing teacher, after all). I certainly do not think my students need less writing practice now, but I see greater focus when I use yoga or meditation. As an added bonus, I see that the students respect those first two minutes of class more now: the late-comers are much more quiet and quick about settling down in class if we've started our meditation than they used to be if we had started with a writing prompt. They seem to respect these yoga moments more.

I start by having students begin to "center themselves" by turning off their phones, clearing off their desk tops, moving the coffee or water bottles to the floor, finding a comfortable way of sitting, and closing their eyes (if students do not want to close their eyes—and many veterans or anyone with PTSD will not feel comfortable closing eyes—I ask them to take their gaze down to their desks to eliminate distractions and the urge to peek at their classmates). I close the classroom door, and stand in the front of the room. I sometimes may shut off the overhead lights, unless doing so would make it too dark in the room (I want centering, not snoring!) I verbally cue students to uncross legs, place feet flat on the floor and rest the palms of the hands either in their laps or on the desks. We take a few breaths, not forcing or lengthening them, but just noticing them. I do this with them, so they don't feel rushed. I then ask students to deepen their breaths, and to notice their belly expanding with that deep breath. After a short hold, we exhale slowly. After a few rounds of deep breathing, I lead them through some seated asana, or physical poses, including neck rolls, arm raises, cat/cow, and leg stretches. I try to offer many alternate poses and if any student wishes to simply sit quietly at his or her desk during this, they are more than welcome to do so. What no student can do is play on his or her phone during this time.

Sometimes, as an alternative to the asanas, I will lead students through a short meditation. I set the stage the same way: lights low, remove distractions from desktops, comfortable posture. I start by cuing deep belly breaths. Then I may ask students to think of a color that represents peace and clarity to them—I tell them that for me that color is the color of the Caribbean Sea, a clean turquoise blue. Then I ask them to imagine that color as a ball of light that grows in their chests each time they take a deep cleansing breath. With each exhale, I tell them to imagine a gray, smoky fog leaving their bodies. The gray smoke

represents their stresses, their aggravations, and their fears. The color in their chests represents their bliss and peace. The goal during this short meditation is to grow that ball of color in the chest, and to exhale all the fear and negativity.

Another meditation involves a place. I ask students to think of a place where they feel most relaxed—I tell them that for me that is the beach. I ask them to remember all the details of their place, including the smells, the sounds, the sights. I tell them to picture themselves there, in that place, right now. Then, I ask them to tune in to how their bodies feel, as they imagine being in that place.

In the First Year Experience class, when we discuss the stress response, I lead the class through a much longer yoga sequence, incorporating some standing poses, and a longer meditation session. The

yoga poses used in the classroom, along with the verbal cues, are included in the appendix to this article.

With all the discussion in higher education today about resilience and student success rates, there is a place for complementary methods like yoga and meditation. Our students are facing innumerable pressures as they work toward academic completion and success. Far fewer of our students, especially at the community college and developmental level, fit the mold of traditional student; instead, they attend college in addition to working, raising a family and caring for elders. Without the proper tools to manage stress and to focus the mind, those students find themselves drowning in worry and falling behind in their studies because they lack the skills to train their brains. Yoga and meditation are two skills that can be taught to students to help them more successfully manage the many stressors they face.

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Appendix

Yoga Poses for the Classroom

Sit with feet flat, legs uncrossed *(cue students to move cell phones, coffees, etc. out of the way)*

Rock back and forth on the sit bones so you are balanced between them

Hands can rest on the desk in front of you, or your thighs (palms up for energy, or palms down to feel more grounded)

Imagine a string attached to the crown of your head, gently pulling you into a straight posture

Chin can be slightly dipped toward the chest

Eyes close...or gently gazing down on the desk or floor in front of you

Take an inhale through the nose...draw the breath through the four corners of the lungs, all the way down to the belly

Feel the belly expand slightly

Exhale slowly through the nose

Take a few breaths, slowly, at your own pace

Imagine you are inhaling cooling, cleansing breath

Imagine you are exhaling anxiety or stress

Gently let the left ear fall toward the left shoulder...not pushing, just letting gravity work

Take a few moments to feel your neck stretch

Inhale the head back up to center

Gently let the right ear fall toward the right shoulder...not pushing, just letting gravity work

Take a few moments to feel your neck stretch

Inhale the head back up to center

Gently let the chin drop toward the chest, taking a few moments to feel the back of the neck and maybe the tops of the shoulders stretch

Inhale the head back up to center

Take your left hand and rest it on your right knee...gently twist at the waist

Inhale your spine up toward the sky...exhale deeper into the twist

Take a few breaths here

Come back to center

Take the right hand and rest in your left knee...gently twist at the waist

Inhale your spine up toward the sky...exhale deeper into the twist

Take a few breaths here

Come back to center

Reach arms up to the sky

Wrap your right fingers around your left wrist, lifting and pulling to the side

Feel the opening in the side of your body

Move to the other side, lifting and pulling

Feel the opening in the side of your body

Return hands to thighs or the desk

Take another inhale...deep down into the belly

Now, exhale through the mouth

Bring movement into fingers and toes

Gently open eyes

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Students Dread the "P" Word: Is Turnitin® Good for Plagiarism Detection and Feedback?

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This paper is based on a presentation made at NADE 2016, in Anaheim, California, entitled "Turnitin—An Extraordinary Teaching and Feedback Tool in the Writing Classroom" which discussed the value and benefits of using Turnitin (TII), a subscription-based software/website available to universities that serves as an audio-visual feedback tool, a plagiarism checker, and a self- monitoring tool to assist in creating correct citation and producing original work by students in all courses requiring writing and research. TII is a valuable resource, not only as a plagiarism checker, but also as an extraordinary tool for giving comprehensive feedback on papers, including audio feedback. Students consistently report how much they value the feedback they receive using TII. This paper will discuss the use of TII to grade effectively including the use of comment banks and Quick Marks, incorporating custom rubrics, and providing audio feedback. Narrative experience of students and faculty using TII at Kaplan University will also be discussed.

At the NADE conference at Anaheim, in March 2016, I gave a presentation about an extraordinary resource—Turnitin, a tool that is not only a plagiarism checker, but that also serves as an efficient and time-saving tool for giving comprehensive feedback on papers, including audio feedback. Students consistently report how much they value the feedback they receive using Turnitin (TII). TII is a subscription-based software from an internet software product launched by iParadigms, a web company based in Oakland, California. It is widely used in the United States and the United Kingdom, and more recently in Asia, Africa, and Europe. This paper will discuss the value of using TII to grade effectively including the use comment banks, Quick Marks, custom rubrics, and audio feedback. Narrative experience of students and faculty using TII at Kaplan University, where classes are sometimes large, will also be discussed.

The Value of Turnitin as a Plagiarism Checker

In teaching first-year composition students the necessity and use of citation, I would be confronted with their trepidation at learning how to avoid the dreaded "P" word: plagiarism. Every term I would wrestle with the onslaught of incorrect attempts at paraphrasing and citation in student papers. Once I discovered TII, I had found a way to quickly and painlessly teach students to self-monitor for plagiarism. Kaplan University (KU) has a large, diverse student body comprised of working adults; parents with young children; men and women in the military; and baby boomers seeking degrees for a career change—a step up the employment ladder—or for personal gratification.

At KU, students submit their papers to an assignment drop-box where they are automatically fed into the TII website, a service to which KU subscribes. At the company website, student papers are immediately checked against a large database of 60 billion webpages, 600+ student papers, 154 + million journal articles, periodicals, and books ("By the numbers," n.d.). An immediate originality report is generated for each paper where similarity is flagged by comparison with any of the foregoing documents. Plagiarism generally ranges from unintentional plagiarism where some incorrect and improper attempts at citation are made, to papers where passages or even whole papers are cut and pasted from other sources. TII has conducted a comprehensive survey "ranking the types of plagiarism by intent and then provides data on the prevalence and problematic nature of type based on the feedback from 879 survey respondents" ("Preventing Plagiarism," n.d.).

Turnitin's Function to Self-Detect Plagiarism:

When students submit their essays to TII, it automatically generates an originality report by matching their work against the aforementioned web sources, journal articles, books and student papers. TII then provides a similarity percentage and flags troublesome areas with incorrect or no citation or too many quotations. Students can immediately correct the deficiencies in their papers and resubmit for a lower similarity percentage. My practice before grading is to check all student papers and delete multiple submissions, retaining only those papers with the lowest similarity percentage. This function enables students to self-monitor for plagiarism and teaches them the value of effective paraphrasing, quotation, and citation.

Some researchers, such as Claire Penketh and Chris Beaumont (2014), discuss the potential for plagiarism

detection software to operate as a "change artifact" in writing development and suggest that it is less beneficial in checking for plagiarism in student writing than Turnitin would have us believe. Experience at KU has proved otherwise. Initially, students resist the idea of submitting their work to be analyzed by plagiarizing-detection software claiming that this presumes their guilt in plagiarizing and even that there are potential privacy violations by the use of this software. However, when students discover that they can use the software as a self-monitoring tool to detect plagiarism, they accept and even welcome the process. They find that they can compare originality reports that are generated for their drafts, and then turn in a final version of their papers where they have revised paraphrasing, in-text citation, and reference page citations. Each paper is categorized by a green (acceptable), yellow (problematic), and red (severely problematic) zone by TII, alerting students to pay heed to specific similarity percentages, with the intention to bring their work into the green zone and aim for the lowest similarity percentage possible. Some similarity may still ensue because citations in their bibliographies may be flagged. In this case, students are assured that their papers although bearing a higher similarity percentage would still be acceptable. As a result, KU faculty and students are satisfied with the service provided by TII.

However, what may be problematic is the point indicated by Foster (2002): "What makes it effective—but also controversial—is that it [TII] keeps the papers that colleges submit for inspection, in order to enlarge its database" (para. 4). Foster also mentions (para. 7) that in the earlier part of this decade, this practice was thought to infringe on copyright laws and some universities like University of California, Berkeley, deliberately chose to not use TII as plagiarism-detection software for their students' academic work (2002). In spite of this, TII has become an efficient and time-saving feedback tool that has been widely appreciated by educators and students.

Turnitin as a Comprehensive and Time-Saving Feedback Tool

At Kaplan University, where I consistently teach large composition classes ranging from 30 to 35 students, I would invariably find my fingers bone-tired from repeatedly typing the same comments on student papers—until I discovered the value of Turnitin, Giving consistent high-quality and holistic feedback to students in large classes is every instructor's challenge. With TII, faculty can use the Grademark feature to create and save banks of comments and use these as "QuickMarks" by just pointing and clicking within the text of a paper. Custom comments can also be prepared for thesis development, the quality of the argument, and other comments specific to each assignment. Rubrics can also be created and saved for each assignment. And, perhaps most valuable of all, TII allows instructors to provide audio feedback, which in writing-heavy classes is a boon. It saves the instructor endless typing or the proffering of repetitive formulaic comments. With audio comments of three to five minutes per paper (they can be longer or shorter in duration), it is possible to holistically cover the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. Finally, the use of the rubric tailored to the assignment allows students to see the breakdown of sub-categories and note how the grade was derived. English instructors teaching advanced composition often note that it is easier to give feedback on grammar, punctuation, mechanics, but it is more labor-intensive to provide feedback on rhetoric, argumentation, logical fallacies, and holistic issues in student work.

While this is the case, the development of a student's argument—paucity of credible research, threadbare content, insufficient development of a topic, other rhetorical flaws, and the appearance of logical fallacies—are the areas for which students most value feedback. Audio feedback can be particularly valuable in providing comments in classes ranging from developmental writing to subjects of the sciences and the humanities. Emily Buckley and Lisa Cowap (2013) point out that in their experience at a university in the United Kingdom, the use of TII has positive benefits for students; however, their "staff" experienced some "technical difficulties" in the use of this software. They still extol the virtues of TII as a "formative feedback tool," and I believe that it functions well in providing both summative and formative feedback, especially for students writing final research papers in advanced composition courses. TII provides the ease of one platform to check for plagiarism, provide audio-visual feedback, and save banks of grading rubrics and comments, making it simpler to use than just downloading student papers and inserting comments in Microsoft Word. It saves instructors time in uploading and downloading papers and any time saved can be spent in providing better quality feedback.

Turnitin as a Tool for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

Such feedback also helps with assessment of student learning outcomes. At KU, every unit of learning in a course is tied to both unit and course outcomes, making every step of the students' progress accounted for. For example, in College Composition I and II, each unit has outcomes that are tied to four or five course learning outcomes against which students are measured for the major course assignments. In advanced composition, CM

220, which I teach, these assignments include a capstone final paper with an annotated bibliography, a multimedia project using PowerPoint or Prezi, or students may create an advertising brochure in which they demonstrate their ability to problem solve using digital media. Faculty are trained in being able to assign a score from a scale of one to five for each course learning outcome, with "introductory" being level one to "mastery" being level five. Faculty must complete course learning outcomes for certain projects in each course, in addition to providing students with graded feedback. Course learning outcomes are explained to students and highlighted in each week's seminar and learning materials, to make clear to them how each unit's outcomes are related to the course outcomes. Course outcomes are shared with students in addition to their grades and written feedback for assignments. The comments bank and customized rubric features of TII make it possible to integrate the grading and feedback process with the rating of learning outcomes.

Since the adoption of TII at Kaplan University, I have given presentations to fellow faculty to encourage more instructors to adopt it as a feedback tool. At KU, it is being used as a plagiarism checker, but instructors can choose to use it for providing feedback. For ease and efficiency, it is to be recommended. Also, as students receive comprehensive feedback, rarely is a grade contested, thus ensuring peace of mind and satisfaction to the instructor and students that their work is well received. On student surveys, students consistently point out to receiving excellent feedback, making educators feel their time is also being well spent.

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A Positive Approach to Good Grammar

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Correct grammar is important for precise, accurate, academic prose, but the traditional skills-based approach to teaching grammar is not effective if the goal is good writing. The sentence-combining approach shows promise. However, sentence modeling is more likely to produce strong writing and enhance reading comprehension. Through sentence modeling and understanding how punctuation makes meaning, developmental writers can employ sophisticated sentences, use punctuation effectively, and follow the conventions of standard English with minimal grammar instruction. Students analyze how and why authors make certain moves in their writing, then produce similar effects in their own writing. Inspired by Constance Weaver's approach to grammar that is "positive, productive, and practical" and by Rei Noguchi's emphasis on minimal grammatical terminology, this method makes for engaged instruction and retention of skills.

A former colleague, a now-retired history professor, hosted a website to assist students with their exams. On this site, he posted lists of terms, possible essay topics, and, to the amusement of many of his colleagues, students' faux pas to test questions. One student's answer has stuck with me: in response to the question, "Who is Bob Dole?", the student wrote "He is the senate." For those who recognized the dour Dole as the Senate Republican majority leader, this was a chuckle moment, an almost satirically appropriate answer. However, history professor was holding up this student's answer as an example of *what not to write*. But, I thought, perhaps the student knew Bob Dole was a United States Senator and the student's unfortunately poor grammar had generated an incorrect answer. If only he had written, "He is a senator," the student might have received credit rather than ridicule. I wonder: was the student's incorrect answer due to lack of knowledge or to lack of good grammar?

Of course, I don't know the answer, but I do know that grammar matters. It matters especially in the academic arena in which precision and accuracy are requisite for clear writing. It matters because no one wants to say the wrong thing (particularly inadvertently). As I jokingly tell my students, good grammar is the difference between "feeling you're nuts" and "feeling your nuts," between having what you say be taken seriously or not. Clear writing allows readers to focus on the content of the message, and not be confused by the message itself.

What is the Role of Grammar Instruction in the Writing Classroom?

By grammar, I mean writing at the sentence level. I agree with Rei Noguchi's (1991) definition that "within traditional grammar, . . . the term . . . mean[s] the set of categories, functions, and rules . . . that teachers commonly employ to describe a sentence and its parts" (p. 2). In other words, grammar is not concerned with organization of ideas nor with paragraph development, but rather with clear, correct sentences. I also appreciate Constance Weaver's (2008) emphasis that grammar involves more than knowing the rules; it is knowing how to use language effectively: "The grammar of a language is its structure, which enables us to communicate whether or not we or anybody else consciously understands that structure" (p. 1). As Weaver's words suggest, it is *not* the goal of grammar instruction to turn students into grammarians, but rather to enable students to communicate effectively, to produce compelling writing. Students should have grammar knowledge on a need to know basis—what do they need to know to make their writing interesting and engaging? What do they need to know to deliver a clear message or to produce a desired effect? Grammar instruction should not be overly preoccupied with error correction; rather it should be concerned with editing and producing skillful writing. In short, grammar knowledge should help writers write well.

Different approaches to teaching grammar in the writing classroom have proven more—or less—effective. First I will review the traditional approach to teaching grammar (the skills-based approach) as well as a more recent strategy (sentence combining) and consider what research says about the effectiveness of these approaches for improving writing. Then I examine an alternative approach: sentence modeling.

Skills-Based Approach to Teaching Grammar

In a skills-based approach to grammar, students are taught grammatical terms and rules. For instance, students are asked to identify parts of speech (i.e., noun or verb), sentence types (i.e., simple, compound, complex), sentence parts (i.e., phrase or clause). Students might be trained to

spot and correct sentence errors (such as run-on sentences or sentence fragments) in sample sentences or paragraphs.

The thinking behind a skills-based approach is that teaching grammar and mechanics will enable students to understand how language works, to write more effectively and correctly, and to reduce the number of errors in their own writing. The belief is that explicit teaching of grammar rules helps students identify errors and correct these, or avoid errors in the first place. Moreover, knowing grammatical terms provides a common language for teachers and their students to discuss sentences and errors so as to improve the quality of writing.

What Research Says About a Skills-based Approach

Despite the "logic" behind it, a skills-based approach to grammar instruction is not supported by research. Since the 1960's, researchers have acknowledged that "Study after study . . . confirms that instruction in formal grammar has little or no effect on the quality of student composition" (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoer, 1963, p. 37). Hillocks (1986) in his review of research in written composition done from 1963 to 1982 draws an even stronger conclusion:

> School boards, administrators, and teachers who impose the systematic study of traditional grammar on their students over lengthy periods of time in the name of teaching writing do them a gross disservice which should not be tolerated by anyone concerned with the effective teaching of good writing. (p. 248)

Moreover, research shows that students do not enjoy this type of grammar instruction. In Hillocks' 1971 survey of over 3,000 high-school students' attitudes toward English, he found that traditional grammar was "the least interesting part of their English programs"; students called grammar instruction "'useless,' 'unimaginative,' 'repetitive,' 'passive,' 'complicated,' and 'unpleasant'" (cited in Hillocks & Smith, 1991, p. 596).

Hillocks and Smith's recommendation about traditional grammar instruction make sense: ". . . the grammar sections of a textbook should be treated as a reference tool that might provide some insight into conventions of mechanics and usages. It should *not* be treated as a course of study to improve the quality of writing" (1991, p. 600).

Sentence Combining Approach to Teaching Grammar

As an alternative to traditional grammar instruction, a sentence combining approach shows students how to combine sets of sentences into increasingly complex structures. The thinking behind this strategy is that by manipulating sentences students will learn to create sophisticated and varied sentences. In this way, sentence combining incorporates grammar instruction organically.

What Research Says About a Sentence Combining

Research on sentence combining is promising. Cooper (1975), writing about sentence combining, concludes that "'no other single teaching approach has ever consistently been shown to have a beneficial effect on syntactic maturity and writing quality' (p. 72)" (cited in Hillocks and Smith, 1991, p. 598). This beneficial effect makes sense since sentence-combining encourages students to write more sentences and to generate increasingly more complex sentences.

However, it is not clear whether sentence combining reduces students' errors in writing, especially since "experimenting with more complex sentence structures, errors are bound to result" (Hillocks and Smith, 1991, p. 600). Further, it's not clear if sentence combining increases student's reading comprehension:

> Kerek, Daiker, and Morenberg (1980, p. 1072) state that 'after 10 years of prolific research and in spite of some promising results, Mellon's earlier remark that sentence combining practice 'may contribute to the development of reading ability' still remains more a reasonable possibility than an unassailable fact.' (1969, p. 75 as cited in Hillocks and Smith, 1991, p. 600)

So while a sentence-combining approach is effective—and certainly more effective than traditional grammar instruction—a third approach, sentence modeling, is also promising and may be more effective, intuitive, and sustainable than either traditional grammar or sentence-combining.

Modeling Approach to Teaching Grammar

A modeling approach to grammar operates on a positive example paradigm: modeling what students *should* or *could* do in their writing. By examining examples from professional readings or student writing, students understand effective sentence patterns and punctuation usage that skillful writers employ. Providing useful examples—sentences budding academic writers can use in their own prose—encourages students to expand their writing repertoire.

Sentence modeling is grounded in the idea that "grammar" is about making meaning: if the goal of writing is to communicate ideas to readers, students must examine effective grammar and usage in the context of writing. Understanding the strategic use of syntax and punctuation can help writers emphasize or de-emphasize ideas, con-

form to the expectations of academic writing, and effectively communicate their ideas to their intended audience. Moreover, understanding how, why, and when writers use certain sentence patterns or punctuation marks can enable students to become better readers.

How Sentence Modeling Works

Teachers can follow a step-by-step process to enable students to create effective sentences through modeling:

1. Identify a sentence type useful to students: because it is a common move in academic writing; because students do not have that sentence pattern in their repertoire; because it will improve students' abilities to effectively express their ideas; or because they are using that sentence type incorrectly in their own writing.
2. Find examples of that sentence type in the course readings or in student writing.
3. Analyze *why* the writer uses that sentence type—to what end or to what effect.
4. Examine *how* the sentence functions—as a sentence itself and as a sentence in the larger context of the reading.
5. Have students imitate and practice the sentence type in a way they might use in their own writing.
6. Evaluate students' attempts to model sentences, encourage appropriate usage, and praise students for using target sentences in their writing.

The following is an explanation of how this process might play out in the classroom. A common move in academic writing is the appositive, a sentence type perhaps unfamiliar to novice writers. From the course readings (in a developmental reading-writing class, students read about Walter Mischel's intriguing experiment, "The Marshmallow Test") several examples of appositives can be found. Here is one:

> More than 40 years ago, Walter Mischel, PhD, a psychologist now at Columbia University, explored self-control in children with a simple but effective test. (American Psychological Association)

This sentence can be highlighted in the reading, the appositive underlined. Then students can examine the logic behind this sentence pattern: *Why* did the author include the underlined information about this person in this sentence? What's the purpose of this information? *How* did the writer include the information? That is, how does it fit (grammatically) into the sentence? *When* did the writer include this information in the reading? *How often* did the writer include information like this? Once students understand the grammatical and rhetorical nature of the appositive, they can apply this sentence pattern in their own writing. Students may be prompted to reflect: Why might you, as a writer, include similar information when you write your essay about the Marshmallow test readings? How would you do that? They can then be required to write sentences using appositives about the Marshmallow test, sentences they may incorporate into their upcoming essays. In this way, students both understand better the reading (why an appositive is used at the first mention of Walter Mischel) and develop a sophisticated sentence type they can employ immediately in their own writing.

This same modeling approach can be used to help students understand the grammar of punctuation. Instructors can identify punctuation that students are using incorrectly in their writing (such as commas), or that they are not using at all (maybe colons or semicolons). Examples of that punctuation can be located in the class readings and then analyzed to understand *why* the writer uses that punctuation and *how* the sentence functions. Students can be prompted to emulate and practice writing sentences using that punctuation in a way they might in their papers. Students can work in pairs or in groups, share their sentences, then display sentences on the board—which can be reviewed by the teacher and/or the class, and corrected or revised, if need be. Students can gain further practice with short homework assignments.

What Experts Say About Sentence Modeling

Although there is not a significant body of research on a modeling approach to teaching grammar, there is support from professional organizations and experts. For instance, the NCTE's position statement (2002) endorses modeling because it integrates reading, writing, and grammar:

Another approach is for students to imitate model sentences; when students read a model passage and then write their version of it, imitating its grammatical features, they integrate reading skill, writing practice, and grammatical understanding. Moreover, Joseph M. Williams (1989) in his classic book *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace* argues that modeling is a first and logical step in helping novice college writers develop skills: **"**Copy and imitation, time-honored ways of teaching writing, will help the less advanced students feel the rhythm and movement that a long but clear sentence demands (Preface)."

How Sentence Modeling Can Aid Reading Comprehension

Intuitively, it makes sense that sentence and punctuation modeling can aid reading comprehension. If students understand how sentences are put together and how punctuation creates meaning, if they can replicate those patterns and effects in their own writing, they are developing a strong understanding of the logic of the language.

Sentence or punctuation modeling can be employed intentionally to aid reading comprehension. For instance, students could focus on a challenging aspect of an author's writing style, then analyze the author's style: how sentences are shaped and why, or how punctuation is employed. When students are required to imitate the author's style, they get a feel for the writing, they understand (consciously or not) how the language works.

Case in point: When students in an advanced composition course were asked to analyze Jared Diamond's use of extremely long sentences that include parallelism and parentheses, they were able to successfully imitate Diamond's style and write a thoughtful answer to a discussion question. In the process, students demonstrated their understanding not only of the reading but of parallelism, parentheses, and semicolons. Here is one student group's answer to a question requiring that students understand Diamond's explanation for the collapse of Norse Greenland's society:

> Diamond explains that the collapse of Norse society in Greenland fulfills his five point framework because the Norse inadvertently inflicted irreparable damage on their environment and depleted the natural resources (by cutting trees, stripping turf, overgrazing the land, and causing soil erosion); they lived through a period of climate change (from relatively mild when they first arrived to a cold period during which they perished); their trade with Norway declined (so they were deprived of essential goods, such as iron and timber); their encounters with hostile neighbors weakened their population (the Inuit killed several Norse settlers); and their own inability to adapt to the changes in their environment (the Norse stubbornly raised cows rather than fish, and imported luxury goods for the church rather than items essential to survival) led to their demise.

By closely analyzing and understanding a writer's particular style and being able to reproduce that style, these students have demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of grammar as well as a strong grasp of the text.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Modeling Approach

An advantage of sentence or punctuation modeling is flexibility. The types of sentences or pieces of punctuation to emphasize can be modified to fit the course readings and students' own writing needs. Moreover, modeling integrates reading and writing in an authentic way: analysis and imitation of writing enables students to comprehend how style supports content. Better yet, minimal grammar instruction is needed as students get a "feel" for the language, rather than learn grammar terms. Less time spent on terms means more efficient lessons and more time spent on writing. And sentence modeling or punctuation practice benefits most students as they generate original sentences they can use in their essays. Modeling also creates opportunities to reread the text: students see the author's writing again as they use it for models for their own writing. Furthermore, modeling helps students edit their writing. Since students learn to carefully examine sentences and punctuation, both in professional writing and in their own writing, they can apply this same scrutiny to their own final drafts. Finally, modeling is a positive, rather than punitive approach: The focus is on improving writing and developing skills, with a de-emphasis on error correction.

However, there are potential disadvantages to sentence modeling. Modeling is not systematic: sentence or punctuation activities may not progress in a logical order. This approach may be more time intensive, as instructors must create sentence and punctuation lessons from the class texts. These texts may not provide enough examples for practice, as some students need to see many sample sentences or many examples of punctuation and practice often before they master the skill. Moreover, examples from readings may be complicated or messy; course readings may not always provide clear models for beginning writers.

To address these challenges, instructors can plan a logical progression of sentence lessons, for instance, beginning with simple sentences, then adding introductory phrases and appositives, and moving toward more sophisticated sentence types, such as parallel structure or quote integration. Once lessons are created, it is easy to substitute examples from various readings, or to skip lessons students will not benefit from. Sentences from professional writers can be shortened or edited to avoid overly complex examples and to highlight key sentence elements. Moreover, instructors can generate additional examples to demonstrate how sentence patterns can be used in students' own writing.

Conclusion

Constance Weaver, in her book *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing*, makes a strong case for grammar instruction that is "positive, productive, and practical" (Preface), instruction that enables students to see new ways to write and good reasons to write well. Sentence and punctuation modeling can be a positive, productive, and practical approach to grammar instruction. Students benefit from examining texts for effective language use; they practice and play with language; they hone their new reading and writing skills while composing essays for their English classes. These skills, of close reading and careful writing, can be carried with students beyond the English classroom.

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Retention and Relevance for CTE-Focused Students through Problem-Based Learning

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In fall 2013, Career and Technical Education (CTE)-focused composition classes were piloted to accommodate Leeward Community College's requirement for college-level composition for students in the CTE majors. The first CTE-focused class was an accelerated developmental education reading and writing course for students placing two steps below college-level. In the subsequent semester, an accelerated co-requisite composition course was piloted. To further ground instruction in application, a second instructor came to the CTE composition classes, portraying the CEO of a local business. The CTE students developed either PowerPoint presentations or Weebly websites to promote their services. CTE student retention in these collaborative courses has been nearly 100%. Having an "outside expert" address the class makes the composition work concrete.

The Problem

For many career and technical education (CTE) students[i], English seems irrelevant. Their focus is on their career fields, and it is challenging to engage them in seemingly esoteric subjects such as composition. Thus an effective instructor must tie course student learning outcomes to student schema and interest. This will lead to student recognition that an effective writing and research process will lead to a quality product and composition skills are transferable to work life.

The issue is exacerbated at Leeward Community College (LCC) because 25.1% of entering CTE students place into two-steps below college-level English, ENG 24C; and 30.6% into one-step below (Igarashi, 2015)[ii]. Thus students may have to enroll in up to six credits of developmental English courses before taking ENG 100, the foundational requirement for all associate degrees at LCC.

While a major mission of an open-door institution is to provide students with higher educational opportunities no matter what their academic background or professional goals, often times, colleges adopt a one-course-fits-all attitude towards requirements, especially at the developmental level, resulting in a high dropout rate[iii]. Typically, according to the U.S. Department of Education, only 52% of all career and technological students persist to earn a certificate or to graduation (2013). As the U.S. Department of Labor reported that 645,000 jobs opened in the trade, transportation, and utility sector and 253,000 jobs in manufacturing, clearly LCC needed to change in order to help meet national workplace needs (2013).

Indeed, the U.S. Department of Education's 2012 *A Blueprint for Transforming Career and Technical Education* reported:

> CTE must lead students to develop the knowledge and skills required for success in college, career, and civic life….It...includes learning and practicing a set of employability skills, such as the ability to work collaboratively in diverse teams, communicate effectively, think critically, solve problems, find and analyze information, ask challenging questions, and adapt to change, that make individuals more employable across specialty areas. These employability skills, or 21st-century skills, are the transferable skills that empower a person to seamlessly transition from one job or field to another for a lifetime of career success. These skills are also important in civic life because they empower individuals to understand and tackle pressing public problems in their communities. (p.7)

The language arts provide practice and development in all of these areas. In fact, these skills are the foundation of LCC's Career and Technical Education English program.

In summer 2013, Michelle Igarashi from LCC's Language Arts Division began work on a new curriculum designed to make CTE students locally, nationally, and globally competitive. The first step was to discuss the issue with Leeward's CTE faculty to ascertain the language arts demands of students and professionals engaged in their respective fields. Igarashi compiled the following list, which included both cognitive and non-cognitive skills,

i For Leeward Community College, CTE includes Business, Automotive, Culinary Arts, Health Programs, Television Production, Information and Computer Science, Substance Abuse Counseling, and Digital Media.

ii Using Compass Writing and Reading exam with cut-off scores at ENG 24: 0-39, ALP: 40-73, ENG 100: 74 and higher.

iii Goal 1.3 in the Leeward CC Strategic Plan Update, Strategic Outcomes & Performance Measures 2008-2015 is to "[i]ncrease the number and percent (to 80%) of students, who, if assigned to a developmental intervention, successfully complete that sequence and move on to degree applicable instruction by 2015."

and aligned them with Hawaii's 2013 Department of Education mandates. Therefore, at course end, students should have the ability to

- produce clear, coherent writing in full sentences as well as bullets,
- demonstrate critical thinking in artifacts,
- analyze beyond the parameters of a text,
- focus on tasks at hand,
- proofread for accuracy, clarity, as well as grammar and mechanics,
- build ethics, business etiquette, and a sense of social responsibility,
- deliver assignments on time, and
- produce quality products.

In addition, Igarashi sought to achieve

- improved retention of CTE students in English courses and within majors,
- higher pass rates in English courses,
- increased matriculation of CTE students into majors,
- skill readiness should students change majors and enter non-CTE academic programs,
- better degree/certification rates, and
- job readiness.

The Solution

CTE-focused composition classes were designed to engage students more fully in the research and writing processes based on feedback from CTE content faculty as well as Igarashi's experience with students in such majors in her general education English courses.

The inaugural CTE- focused composition class was offered in spring 2014 as a combined reading-writing course for students two-steps or more below college level in the same vein as Chabot College (Edgecombe, Jaggars, Xu & Barragan, 2014). For the two years prior to this, LCC had been offering a similarly structured course for general developmental writers and readers (ENG 24). During that same period, 2011-2013, the college was also offering several sections of concurrent co-requisite composition classes, using the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) model pioneered by Community College of Baltimore County (Cho, Kopko, Jenkins & Jaggars, 2012). Teaching strategies used in these new CTE classes included

- grounding learning in application,
- using active learning and accommodating various learner styles,
- working with hands-on and visual learners,
- encompassing general English course SLOs/CLOs,
- engaging students to help establish learning ownership, and
- working with peers on projects and assignments to increase student involvement, responsibility, and cooperation.

Collaboration is a key component not only in CTE professions, but in CTE teaching as well[iv]. At Leeward Community College, partnering on projects is actively encouraged through cross-campus professional development opportunities, English course meetings, and hallway conversations. In years preceding the CTE initiative, the Accelerated Learning Program and ENG 24 faculty had regular course-related meetings to share, encourage, and solve problems as they arose with acceleration expansion. During ALP meetings, Susan Waldman shared her problem-based learning (PBL) model so that when the CTE pilots were being developed, Igarashi knew that there was already a colleague who was using techniques appropriate for CTE students.

According to Jolly and Jacob, a PBL project is meaningful if it fulfills two criteria: students must perceive it as personally meaningful, as a task that matters and that they want to do well, and the project or problem must serve an educational purpose (2012). This grounding of composition to application was a requirement of the CTE pilots as was the development of a problem-solving mindset, as encouraged in the PBL models (Jolly & Jacob, 2012).

When Igarashi was creating the first developmental CTE course, ENG 24C, which combined reading and writing, she was trying to find a way to give students a "real life" target audience that would still allow them to experiment and make mistakes. Waldman's "local business" was a perfect fit. At a point in the semester when Igarashi's students were ready for larger projects and had begun to develop business ideas, Waldman addressed Igarashi's class in order to introduce Waldman's "business." The CTE students were then faced with the problem of how to sell their product or services to an "actual" customer using their writing and presentation skills.

Artifacts

In this PBL assignment, student work was presented to the "CEO." ENG 24C students delivered a business marketing presentation, an act of persuasion, backed by well-chosen data and articulately structured language. They integrated technology to create and publish writing

iv Cornell University research demonstrates that collaboration increases "higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills (2016).

products for a specific purpose, task, and audience. In subsequent semesters, co-requisite students created websites. For each of these products, Waldman and Igarashi cooperated on grading. This collaboration provided outside verification of content and writing skill mastery[v].

ENG 24C. The CTE reading and writing course, ENG 24C, was created for students who were two or more steps below college-level writing. These students needed to gain the reading and composition skills necessary for college success. In this class, they learned public speaking with visual aids, peer evaluating, time management, the development of focus, the development of a public image, adherence to professional ethics, how to think on one's feet and increase self-confidence, and to manage clarity of thought.

One student sample from ENG 24C was "Johnson's Automotive." The student, who had placed two-steps below college writing and reading, had failed a non-CTE course section previously. As a non-traditional student, he had already been in the automotive workforce, but had returned to college as he wanted to build his own business. With a well-considered professional goal in mind, he was impatient to earn a degree and had little interest in abstract exercises. In this new CTE reality-based curriculum, the student flourished. He became motivated and rose as a class leader.

For this task, the student created a business analysis. He then created a five-page MLA-formatted script with a works cited. This was a research essay in disguise. Then he summarized the content down to bullet points for the "local business" project, which he orally presented with his slides first to classmates to garner feedback, then officially to Waldman. For his efforts, he was "chosen" for partnership. This student not only received an "A" for the class, he graduated in spring 2016 after three years in the community college system[vi].

ENG 100/ALP. The next semester, Igarashi developed the higher-level acceleration course, one-level below college composition with concurrent enrollment in the college-level section, ENG 100/ALP. This course encompassed goals and learning objectives for both levels of composition including using a recursive writing process, writing for a specific audience and purpose, developing persuasive writing skills, and finding and incorporating source material.

In this assignment, students designed business proposals using Weebly websites. This project was aided by Waldman's class presentation of her business, which included an extended opportunity for questions and answers. As with the ENG 24C assignment, here students began by organizing sources and writing peer-reviewed research essays. The information was then categorized into coherent sales pages including a homepage with content abstract, an "about" page consisting of a 500-word biography written with a public consumer audience in mind, as well as a product page utilizing labeled visuals, sales charts, and graphics. Unlike ENG 24C, this project did not include a performance component. This made the task more challenging for the student was relegated to the written page to make his/her argument. This simulated a real-world online sales scenario while challenging the students' composition acumen. As with the ENG 24C project, Waldman had a voice in the grades for these projects, as she decided which businesses or services to pursue further.

Conclusion

As a result of this collaborative reality-based assignment designed specifically to meet the interests of CTE students, nearly 100% persevered in these composition class sections. Moreover, the course passing rate was 91% in the two-steps below college-level, ENG 24C, and 73% in the co-requisite, ALP/ENG 100. Indeed a CTE-designed English course is by nature a project-based learning experience, as assignments are based on occupational tasks with language arts content and skills spiraled in. Ergo this union has created a success-driven assignment that not only helps students pass their English course, but improves their growth mindset as well.

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v Collaboration included instructor-instructor, student-instructor, and student-student.

vi This time frame is well below the national average of six years as reported by Paul Fain in *Inside Higher Education* (March 2015).

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