

WHEN THE SPANIELS CONQUERED CENTRAL AMERICA:  
ACADEMIC ENGLISH AND FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION

by

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## DEDICATION

For their unfailing acceptance and regard, I dedicate this work to my parents and to my sister, Yoitsu, Nori and Motoko Sugawara, and; for never falling asleep while I drone on about my ideas, I dedicate all I have achieved and may achieve to my fine wife, Christina Peterson, who wrote (somewhat pointedly):

*Swirling and glittering, the snows of verbosity  
Form drifts on the high, barren plains of Pomposity  
And there, in the lee of a jargon-glazed bluff,  
Ideas lie buried 'neath deep mounds of guff.*

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents the findings of an on-line survey completed by 222 FYC (First Year Composition) instructors at universities and community colleges across the United States along with supplemental information derived from multiple open-ended interviews with seven FYC instructors in Arizona. Both survey and interview questions were designed to accomplish three primary goals: to determine which conventions of academic English FYC instructors identify as most important; to understand the common problems encountered by instructors in teaching those conventions, and; to solicit instructors' perceptions about ways in which learning outcomes might be improved.

Results indicate general consensus among FYC instructors on which skills are both the most critical to academic English proficiency and the most difficult for their students to learn. At the same time, the survey and interview responses reflect widespread dissatisfaction with the ways in which academic English sequences are currently structured, apparently related to the instructors' common perception that the sequences are only "somewhat" successful in terms of preparing students for successful academic writing. Accordingly, the overwhelming majority of FYC instructors suggest changes for increasing the effectiveness of their programs; however, there is surprisingly little agreement among them on what those changes should be.

The concluding section of this study presents pragmatic suggestions – congruent with a number of the instructors' observations – for reconfiguring FYC sequences.

Additionally, it is argued that, aside from the targeted skills addressed by the instructors, the survey and interview responses indicate that academic English has been implicitly invested with culture-specific values which should be made explicit in instruction and which, given the gatekeeping status of FYC courses, the increasing diversity of student populations and the growing divide between the academic and wider cultures, require critical examination.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Late one night not long after I arrived in this country from Japan, I was driving back from Los Angeles to my apartment in San Bernardino, listening to the rebroadcast of an interview with Frank Zappa on the car radio. Just before I pulled off the freeway, in response to a comment from the interviewer (“Dr. Demento”), Zappa suddenly asked “[w]ho makes you do that and why?”<sup>1</sup> It was a supremely un-Japanese question and, probably as a result, made such an impression on me that, in a variety of contexts, I have been asking it of myself and others ever since.

In relation to academic language, the answer to the first part of Zappa’s question was as obvious to me as to any student; that is, the “who” requiring the use of academic language is any member of the hierarchy in postsecondary education with the ability to enforce its use. It was not until I entered the College of Education at the University of Arizona that I was ready to address the second part of the question; that is, why is the use of this particular prose style so critical to academic achievement.

It soon became apparent that a number of authors (e.g., Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Fairclough, 1995; Foucault, 1984; Gee, 2005; Giroux, 1981) had already addressed this issue with the consensus being that the central function of academic language is sociocultural; that is, it serves to maintain the academic culture’s identity, and to promote group cohesion by defining its membership, validating its values and

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<sup>1</sup> Interview transcript available at: FZ as DJ: Dr. Demento, KMET. *Zappa Wiki Jawaka*. [http://wiki.killuglyradio.com/wiki/Dr.\\_Demento](http://wiki.killuglyradio.com/wiki/Dr._Demento)

reproducing its cultural conventions. Street (1984) goes so far as to say that this is its *only* function, stating that:

... grandiose claims for 'academic' literacy are merely those of a small elite attempting to maintain positions of power and influence by attributing universality and neutrality to their own culture conventions (p. 224).

Given its key role in defining, validating and maintaining the academic culture, it is not surprising then that the critical importance of academic language proficiency to student success in the academy has also been the subject of much discussion (e.g., Casnave & Hubbard, 1992; Freedman, 1979; Hyland, 1998; Lindeman, 1993; Pennycook, 1994; Street, 2004). Gosden (1993), in unquestioning acceptance of the given nature of academic language's sociocultural role, argues that it is:

... crucial that all novice writers of research articles (RAs) become aware of the social dialogic nature of scientific discourse and develop the skills required in the appropriate use of linguistic resources which realize such social interaction (p. 56).

In contrast, there is a large body of literature detailing the negative aspects of the required use of academic language: most specifically, the ways in which this requirement works to exclude a large percentage of the population from participating in advanced education (e.g., Ball, 1998; Bartolome, 1998; Bourdieu, Passeron & de St. Martin, 1994; Delpit, 1995; Fordham, 1997; Heath, 1982; Moll, 2005; Waters, 1996). In my own previous written work, I have discussed the ways in which academic language, through its use of specialized jargon and frequently impenetrable prose, effectively precludes academic research from having a significant impact on public and political

decision-making, and, of equal importance, the ways in which academic language's reliance on redundancy and self-reference function to stifle original thought.<sup>2</sup> Given this stance, I feel it is important to explain why my final research act at this institution is an attempt to clarify the conventions of academic language and investigate how they might be more efficiently taught to incoming students since, some might argue, these students will then contribute to the maintenance of academic language through its replication and reproduction.

In this context, however, I disagree with the needs assessment approach to education (e.g., Allison, 1996; Flowerdew, 1993; Love, 1991; Swales, 1990; Swales & Feak, 2004); I do not believe that the inevitable goal of academic language instruction either is or should be to "accommodate students to the content and pedagogy of mainstream classes" (Benesche, 1993, p. 711). I would suggest, instead, that as a number of authors have argued (e.g., Jandt, 2012; Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2008), the relationship between language and culture is direct and reciprocal; a culture both shapes its language and, of equal consequence, is shaped by it. A cursory examination of the origins and development of academic English (AE) and its ongoing effects on academic culture lends support to this position.

### ***1.1 The history of AE***

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<sup>2</sup> The titles of two of the papers submitted to satisfy my degree requirements are illustrative: "Deconstructing Ourselves: An Examination of Academic Hegemony" (2006), and; "The Essential Fullness and Various Particularisms of the Blah Blah: An Inquiry into the Role of Academic English in Restricting Access to Higher Education" (2009).

Michel Foucault (1972) suggested that cultural shifts produce new beliefs and practices, and that an attempt to understand the reasons behind these shifts can provide the basis for an analysis of the effects and subsequent development of the new phenomena. During the Reformation, one such major shift occurred in England when the common tongue replaced Latin as the language of academics. This change was temporally related to the appearance of what Foucault (1984) described as:

“... a will to know which, anticipating its actual contents, sketched out schemas of possible, observable, measurable, classifiable objects ... which imposed on the knowing subject, and in some sense prior to all experience, a certain position, a certain gaze, and a certain function ... (p. 112).

The sudden accessibility of educated thought associated with the switch from Latin to English played a major role in this widespread “will to know” since there followed a significant period when knowledge was relatively democratized. In a study of the changes in discourse style seen in research reports at that time, Bazerman (1988) demonstrates that, initially, the majority of scientific papers published in English were composed of observations and classifications, and suggests that the natural world was perceived to be composed of a series of predictable phenomena that could be understood by relatively simple means. Any literate person was qualified to contribute his or her observations, and the resultant report was widely accepted as adding to scientific knowledge.

As this new information flooded in, however, the perception of the world grew increasingly complex and, mirroring this evolving view of nature, “... the definition of

experiment moves from any made or done thing, to an intentional investigation, to a test of theory, to finally a proof of or evidence for a claim” (p. 5). At that time, the study of natural sciences split into three academic camps: the experimentalists who believed, as their name implies, that experimentation was key to the discovery of natural laws, the philosophists who believed that any natural law which could be discovered by experimentation was trivial, and the alchemists who believed in experimentation but also believed that the only natural laws worth knowing were those that led to spiritual enlightenment and immortality.

In the mid-1600s, Robert Boyle, a leading experimentalist, found himself in a predicament. He had conducted a series of experiments on the expansion of gases with the aid of an air pump but, because the pump was both expensive and difficult to produce, no one could reliably replicate his results. In order to overcome this problem, he repeated his experiments in front of reputable witnesses at the Royal Society, asking them to sign affidavits after each of his demonstrations stating that they had indeed seen what they had seen. Subsequently, Boyle used his research reports to expand on even this impressive pool of witnesses by developing the rhetorical technique Shapin (1984) labels “virtual witnessing” (p. 490); that is, Boyle consciously wrote about his air pump experiments and findings in such a way as to persuade his readers that they had, to all intents and purposes, also witnessed his demonstrations. It proved to be an effective strategy; even without replication, his findings were widely accepted.

Boyle published pamphlets for his fellow experimentalists detailing the rhetorical

devices he used in order to accomplish this. Soon, experimentalist research reports were marked by adherence to Boyle's conventions: a standard form mimicking a linear timeline (the introduction presenting a specific problem followed by the description of an experiment or a series of experiments designed to resolve that problem, and ending with a conclusion presenting the resolution along with suggestions for future experiments), the use of "appositive clauses piled on top of each other" (p. 493) in order to convey the impression of providing all related details, the avoidance of any language which might imply emotional involvement on the part of the researcher, the frequent use of hedges<sup>3</sup> and the reproduction of as many visuals (sketches, diagrams, tables, figures) as possible.

In fairly short order, the philosophists and alchemists retreated, and the experimentalists claimed science. At the same time, however, the new rhetoric determined not only how scientists communicated but also what they could communicate about; it was "... a closed system defining what can, and cannot, be known; the nature of the knower, the known, [and] the audience" (Berlin, 1987, p. 2).

In the mid-1900s, the new field of psychology was also divided into competing factions. On one side were the behaviorists who, with the experimentalists before them, believed that only observable phenomena were appropriate for study; on the other,

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<sup>3</sup> "[I] speak so doubtfully, and use so often *perhaps, it seems, it is not improbable* and other such expressions, as to argue a diffidence to the truth of the opinions I incline to ..." (Boyle quoted in Shapin, 1984, p. 495). Lakoff (1973) points out that a hedged sentence provides its author with the added benefit of being next to impossible falsify; e.g., any sentence that begins with "It might be suggested that ..." cannot be disproved.

were those interested in investigating the invisible processes of cognition, identity formation and perception. The behaviorists, eager to be identified as scientists, adopted the accepted language of science; that is, the experimentalist rhetorical conventions.

Bazerman (1988) analyzed articles published in the *American Journal of Psychology* and the *Psychological Review* spanning the period from their inception in the late 1880s to 1980 and found that, in the mid-1920s, the behaviorists added a new use for bibliographies to the experimentalist rhetoric. Initially, the behaviorists' articles followed the experimentalists' lead, using literature reviews to point out disagreements among the data in previously presented reports then using these disagreements to explain the necessity of their own studies; however, in the mid-1920s, the behaviorists also began to use other authors' work to reinforce the "objective truth" of their own findings; that is, each cited report was presented as a given then used to demonstrate a logical progression leading, inevitably, to the authors' conclusions.

The impact of this new usage became apparent in 1930 when Edwin Boring, then editor of the *American Journal of Psychology*, voicing the consensus, wrote:

[t]he progress of thought is gradual, and the enunciation of a new crucial principle in science is never more than an event that follows naturally upon its antecedents (quoted in Bazerman 1988, p. 273).

Boring's statement made explicit the previously implicit connection between the rhetoric of science and the nature of thought. In other words, it was no longer acceptable for those who wished to be identified as scientists to write about something

someone else had not, at least tangentially, already written about (Canagarajah, 1996; Hyland, 2010). Accordingly, the number of references cited in articles in professional journals increased steadily and were equally distributed throughout the text in order to make it clear that “... every stage of the document both relies on and relates to the work of others” (Swales, 1990, p. 115).

Factions in other academic disciplines followed the behaviorists and, rebranding themselves as sciences (e.g., political science, social science), adopted the recognized style of scientific discourse; that is, the form and linguistic conventions used by the experimentalists to triumph over the philosophists and alchemists in the war for supremacy in the natural sciences in the 1600s, and the incrementalism added by the behaviorists in their battle for psychology in the 1920s.

A second critical corollary to Boring’s statement was that, unless a *thought* is shared (i.e., published), it contributes nothing toward science’s collective march down the road toward knowledge and is, therefore, without value. “Publish or perish”<sup>4</sup> became a reality for academics and, in response, new professional journals sprang up like mushrooms<sup>5</sup>, each associated with a specific academic discipline and each publishing discipline-specific articles written in the accepted scientific form (introduction, body and conclusion all supported with citations to previously published work and including visual representations of the data when possible), in the accepted

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<sup>4</sup> The phrase first appeared in a professional publication in 1938 in the *Association of American Colleges Bulletin*, 24; however, it was already offset by quotation marks.

<sup>5</sup> The number of refereed academic journals is still growing at a rate of 3.26 percent per year – almost doubling every 20 years (Mabe cited in Bauerlein et al, 2010).

scientific prose (clause-dense, hedged, neutral) and reaching acceptable conclusions (linear, logical and incremental).

AE had arrived and, as Giroux (1981) noted, with its widespread adoption, knowledge became synonymous with information:

... the production of which appears to be independent of human beings. From this perspective, objective knowledge is viewed as independent of time and place; it becomes universalized, ahistorical knowledge ... expressed in a language that is basically technical and allegedly value-free (p. 52).

In the 1960s, the final modern convention was added to AE, the widespread use of new, specialized vocabularies. Words were created: some derived from extant words in relatively obscure languages (e.g., *nomothetic*) and some from standard English in new combinations of particles (e.g., postmateriality). Nouns were used to modify other nouns (e.g., mediation paradigm), acronyms proliferated (e.g., WAC) and, perhaps most confusingly, words most people assumed they understood were appropriated and given new definitions (e.g., embodiment).

Initially, these terms were defined in the bodies of scholarly work so that an educated layperson, with some effort, could still follow the authors' arguments. By 1965, however, the publishing trend in journals was toward more and shorter reports (Kuhn, 1970). Given the prescribed form, layered appositive phrases, hedges and author-vacated prose (the latter often requiring the use of space-consuming, passive grammatical constructions) necessary to the rhetoric and given the increasing number of bibliographic references, general intelligibility was the obvious sacrifice. Soon, very

few in the general public knew what academics were talking about.

Inevitably, as the specialized vocabulary proliferated, discipline-specific reports became opaque even to other academics. The negative effects were immediate, most especially in the social sciences where the interrelated disciplines of psychology, anthropology, linguistics, sociology and education split apart under the weight of words. In response, subspecialties like linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and the psychology of education appeared – each with their own journals, and each with their own specialized vocabularies – until now, even academics within a single department may have trouble understanding what their colleagues are talking about.<sup>6</sup>

In further illustration of the dangers posed by academic jargon, Michael Billig (2013) traces the term *ideational metafunction* from its coinage by Michael Halliday (who explicitly defined it as an abstract term relating to the general contexts of language evolution) to its use by Prosser and Webb<sup>7</sup> (with a citation to Halliday) through its use by Sue Starfield (with a citation to Prosser and Webb), demonstrating that Prosser and Webb used it to mean “content” (a very different meaning from that originally ascribed it by Halliday) while Starfield says: “[t]his use of the ideational metafunction was also found by Prosser and Webb (1994) to be characteristic of successful essays” (quoted in Billig, p. 49). As Billig notes, it is difficult to imagine that Starfield was simply observing with this sentence that Prosser and Webb had discovered

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<sup>6</sup> Reflecting the widening intra- and interdisciplinary discourse gaps, see the discussion of FYC genre instruction in Chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> Prosser, M. & Webb, C. (1994). Relating the process of undergraduate essay writing to the finished product. *Studies in Higher Education*, 19: 125-138.

that successful essays had content; what she *did* mean is a mystery.

### **1.2 Justifying the question**

When a language is accessible to fewer and fewer people, when it loses its communicative function, it stagnates and, as goes the language, so goes the culture. Many scholars (e.g., Belcher, 2004; Benesche, 2001; Gee, 2005; McCrary; 2005; Schon, 2001; Street, 1984, 1995; Trimbur, 1989) have argued that academic language can and must adapt in order for the academic culture that sustains it (and that it sustains) to become more adaptable to changing economic, social and political realities – and that it must do this in order to retain both its vitality and its viability. It is a fact, however, that you have to be admitted to the club before you can vote to change its by-laws.

Thomas Cahill (2003) wrote:

[a] type of literacy that can be grasped easily by almost anyone will tend to spread some kind of proto-democratic consciousness far and wide, even if this is accomplished only in small steps over a very long time ... [and] erasing for all time the aura of an unapproachable Sacred Brotherhood of scholars, wisemen, and potentates, will by its very nature tend to demystify additional realms of human experience (p. 60).

It is in relation to the above passage that I reconcile the form and topic of this dissertation with my own considered opposition to traditional AE. I embarked on this research in hopes of contributing to the acceptance of a larger, more diverse academic club membership who may agree with many of those cited above and in the following chapters, that both a “proto-democratic consciousness” and the contributions of those familiar with “additional realms of human experience” are long overdue in the academy.

### 1.3 The AE puzzle

Consider the following:

*S1: They said they only saw it for a few seconds so they didn't have time to measure it.*

*S2: Observers report that, given the relatively brief period during which the phenomenon was visible, no measurements could be obtained.*

Both sentences are syntactically and semantically correct; both contain independent and dependent clauses; both have approximately the same word count and, most importantly, both convey essentially the same information; however, *S1* is not written in academic language while *S2* is. As members of the academic community, we know academic language when we see it; however, a central issue for many in education research – and certainly *the* critical issue for those attempting to teach academic language to students not yet initiated into academic discourse – is how to make explicit the factors which lead us to that recognition.

Those who subscribe to the theory of cultural-historical activity (e.g., Blakeslee, 1997; MacDonald, 1994; Miller, 1994; Russell, 1991) would argue that this is an impossibility since, in their view, *academic language* is a label mistakenly applied to a number of distinct academic genres which can neither be defined nor taught in terms of their formal features but only through our understanding them as “typified rhetorical actions based on recurrent social situations” (Russell, 1997a: p. 224).

A number of education researchers and theorists, however, agree with Fleury's (2005) assertion that, whatever the variations between academic genres, there exists a

core language common to all disciplines in the academy, a language critical to students' academic success. These authors have enumerated and discussed some of this language's more obvious conventions; at the same time, however, they add that there is a certain *je ne sais quoi* which makes a complete descriptive definition of academic language impossible (e.g., Cazden, 2001; Elbow, 1991; Gee, 2006; Street, 1995). Valdes (2004) summarizes this view, stating flatly that: "... we lack a single definition or even general agreement about what is meant by *academic language*" (p. 102).

Others suggest that attempts either to define academic language or to compile a comprehensive list of its characteristic features must fail because academic language is a derivative of the white, middle-class language in which a limited segment of the population, including the majority of academics, were unconsciously or pre-consciously socialized during childhood (e.g., Bourdieu, 1974; Heath, 1982). This is analogous to the ability to distinguish an Australian from an English accent. If you grew up in an English-speaking, American household, you can likely differentiate between the two and, with a little effort, produce at least a reasonable facsimile of each; however, it would prove difficult if not impossible to explain to a non-native speaker all the factors enabling you to do so. In this vein, Bourdieu, Passeron & de St. Martin (1994) contend that, for students not socialized in middle-class language during childhood, academic language proficiency is impossible to attain; while Bartolome (1998) states that any attempt at academic language instruction:

... requires that teachers critically socialize their students in a way of being ... so

that they can begin to critically use the cultural capital that informs and sustains a middle-class white reality. Without entry into that reality, which serves as a base for academic discourses, it is, on the one hand, impossible to effectively teach academic discourses; on the other hand, it would be preposterous for teachers to expect linguistic-minority and other minority students, including working-class whites, to pull academic discourses out of a hat ... (p. 119)

In summary then, in the published opinions of influential theoreticians and researchers, there are two broad ways to imagine academic language instruction and academic language itself: it cannot be defined because no such “thing” actually exists; that is, the term is a floating signifier, a single label mistakenly applied to a group of disparate linguistic genres (e.g., Bazerman, 2005; Blakeslee, 1997; MacDonald, 1994; Miller, 1994; Russell, 1997b), and; there is such a thing as a core academic language but it cannot be defined conclusively since, for undetermined reasons, because it is culturally conferred, or because it is understood in overlapping, yet sometimes contradictory ways by multiple, academic communities of practice (K-12 language educators, EFL educators, undergraduate composition instructors, etc), it resists both definition and comprehensive description (e.g., Bartolome, 1998; Bourdieu, Passeron & Martin, 1994; Cazden, 2001; Elbow, 1991; Gee, 2006; Street, 1995; Valdes, 2004).

This presents a conundrum. Most would agree that designing an effective curriculum, finding the appropriate text and adopting best teaching practices for classroom instruction in either a nonexistent or an undefined, only intuitively recognized subject is an impossibility; nevertheless, all incoming students at accredited postsecondary institutions in the United States are required to successfully complete

from one to two semesters of first year composition (FYC) classes designed to enable them “to master the genres, styles, audiences, and purposes of the academy and the professions” (Lindeman, 1993) or, as Bartholomae (2008) phrased it, “... to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding and arguing that define the discourse of our community” (p. 3). And, to this end, in schools all across the country, educated professionals *are* designing curricula, *are* choosing texts and *are* doing their best to teach their students the rhetorical skills they perceive to be critical to a discourse style they identify as academic English. These classes, typically administered by English departments, formerly comprised a general introduction to English-language poetry and fiction but have evolved to focus on students’ writing and reading critically, formulating and defending thesis statements, constructing logically structured arguments, following specific bibliographic forms and paying close attention to correct grammar and punctuation.

Is this enough? As noted above and in the following chapter, a large number of scholars insist it is not. On the other hand, what if FYC administrators and instructors do have at least a working definition of AE and are able to effectively instruct students in its use?

#### ***1.4 The present research***

It would seem that the simplest way to resolve the underlying question of whether or not composition instructors share a common understanding of AE (and,

therefore, have devised ways to teach it) would be to ask them; interestingly, however, almost no one has. Although anecdotal articles written by instructors sharing their experiences and impressions appear regularly in composition journals (see Chapter 2), the opinions in these articles cannot be generalized. In fact, there is only one relatively large-scale project investigating instructors' perceptions of AE.

In an unpublished study of the similarities and differences between high school English and FYC instructors' expectations of students, Jones (2003) reported the results of a survey of 105 postsecondary instructors in New Jersey (89 from public and private universities; 16 from community colleges) in which they identified incoming freshmen's four major AE weaknesses as: critical thinking skills, developing and supporting major arguments and theses, mastery of basic mechanics (grammar, spelling and punctuation) and facility with research/citations. These results would seem to indirectly hint at a consensus among instructors about the important features of AE; however, the listed skills were written into the survey questions with respondents only asked to rate them in relation to each other. Additionally, two of the four cited categories (developing and supporting arguments and theses, and research/citations) would seem to overlap; however, in terms of large-scale research even tangentially related to the topic of FYC instructors' understanding of AE, that is all there is.

Given the importance of the related issues, I believed this was an omission that could and should be rectified. Accordingly, 1,000 AE instructors teaching at 200 postsecondary institutions across the United States were asked to participate in an on-

line survey designed to elicit responses which would help determine: what, if any, common understanding of AE skills instructors share; whether or not they believe they are able to effectively instruct their students in those skills, and; what improvements they would like to see made in their classrooms and institutions in order to improve students' chances of gaining AE proficiency. Additional survey items were included to provide an overall profile of the respondents (e.g., experience, position, educational background) and, as a result of the literature review described in Chapter 2, a question was included asking respondents to indicate how often they read professional journals related to their field.

Of the 1,000 instructors contacted, 222 completed the survey. In addition, multiple in-person interviews were conducted with FYC instructors both before the survey was posted and after the survey results were compiled. These interviews first proved useful in clarifying the concerns of and issues facing classroom practitioners, and, later, in eliciting insights and observations related to the opinions expressed by their colleagues, the survey respondents. By the conclusion of the study, two things became apparent: first, the theorists are both right and wrong, and; second, as one always hopes when conducting research, more information had been provided than was initially solicited.

## CHAPTER 2: TRENDS IN AE INSTRUCTORS' LITERATURE

### **2.1 Introduction**

As discussed in the previous chapter, scholars from various disciplines have addressed the function, origins, development, and effects of AE's conventions and, although many have noted that AE literacy is critical to academic success, the general consensus is that it is unrealistic to expect that the majority of postsecondary students can be taught the skills necessary to achieve proficiency. At the same time, there is a parallel body of literature written for and often by FYC instructors which explores factors – both in and out of the classroom – that those authors apparently find relevant to AE instruction. In preparation for this research, therefore, it seemed appropriate to become familiar with the current literature in order to have a context in which to understand the concerns of those who would be solicited to participate; however, I was also as aware as any graduate student that:

[t]he amount of material one must read to conduct a reasonable review of a topic keeps growing. Younger scholars can't ignore any of it ... and so they waste precious months reviewing a pool of articles that may lead nowhere (Bauerlein, Gad-el-Hak, Grody, McKelvey & Trimble, 2010, p. 2).

I knew this last would pose a particular risk in relation to a field in which I had no formal training or experience. Accordingly, I contacted a friend, an FYC instructor, and asked which journals and authors she felt would provide the most useful introduction to the literature. She said she could not advise me since she no longer read journals.

When asked why, she answered that, in her experience, none of the articles were useful. She then offered to ask her colleagues if they could make any recommendations. When we spoke again, she told me that, aside from one adjunct instructor who would soon submit an excerpt from his recently completed dissertation to *College Writing*, everyone held the same opinion she did about the journals. I next spoke to a colleague who teaches FYC on the same community college campus where my classes are held and was told that she “rarely” looked at the journals, again, because she believed the articles they published were not relevant to instruction.

Many concerned with teacher education (e.g., Richardson, 1990; Feldman, 2000) have noted the divide between, on the one hand, researchers and theorists and, on the other, classroom instructors. These authors have discussed possible factors contributing to (and ways to overcome) teacher resistance to incorporating both the findings of empirical research and innovative theoretical approaches into their practice. Initially, it seemed possible that what I had encountered in terms of the FYC instructors’ stated indifference to published research was illustrative of this split; I resigned myself, therefore, to exploring the literature unguided.

There are, in fact, more than twenty professional journals currently in print that specifically publish articles focusing on FYC.<sup>8</sup> A number of comprehensive reviews have

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<sup>8</sup> Across the Disciplines, Basic Writing Journal, CEA Forum, College Composition and Communication, College English, College Composition and Communication, Composition Forum, Composition Studies, English for Specific Purposes, English Journal, JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory, Journal of Basic Writing, Journal of Second Language Writing, Journal of Teaching Writing, Research in the Teaching of English, Teaching English in the Two Year College, The WAC Journal, The Writing Center Journal, The Writing Instructor, Writing on the Edge, Written Communication

discussed the history of that literature. Connors (1997) traces the evolution of composition instruction in archival material dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, discussing the ways in which its history – changing over time from a subject area to a discipline – has shaped instructors' attitudes and classroom practices. Goggin (1994, 2000) examines the proliferation of composition journals after 1950, arguing that changes in editorial policies both reflected and shaped the ongoing struggle by those in the field for the acceptance of composition studies as a legitimate scholarly discipline, and; illustrating the value placed on empiricism in that struggle for legitimacy, Roozen & Lunsford (2011) focus on the history and changing definitions of empirical research in NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) publications over the past one hundred years.

Paltridge (2004) provides an overview of the changing theories that have guided and, he suggests, still guide FYC instruction. His review begins with a discussion of the process approach of the 1970s in which students were encouraged to focus more on developing content and effectively expressing their ideas than on mimicking standard essay forms. In the 1980s, the process approach was supplemented by needs analysis and content-based instruction. The author summarizes needs analysis as focusing on what the students need to be able to do (*necessities*), on how far the students' skills are from enabling them to accomplish the necessities (*lacks*) and on what the students themselves perceive to be important (*wants*); while content-based instruction situates FYC learning in a specific academic context (i.e., writing assignments are theme-based

and/or linked to assignments for other classes). The genre approach (discussed in more detail below) was added in the mid 1980s and was topped off, in the late 1990s, by the critical perspective in which:

classroom tasks aim to make visible the social construction and transmission of ideologies, power relationships, and social identities as a way of helping students make choices in their academic writing that reflect who they are and who they want to be (p. 96).

With a tighter focus, Belcher (2004) also discusses the sociodiscoursal (genre based), and sociocultural (situated learning) trends in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and EAP (English for Academic Purposes) instruction, arguing that these pragmatic approaches should be widened to include the sociopolitical factor (critical pedagogy or, as Paltridge terms it, the critical perspective) in which students are instructed in their right to “understand and respond to power differentials” (p. 185) in the academy.

Armed with this background information, I jumped into composition literature and promptly hit my head on a rock. Traditionally, FYC has been divided between three distinct class sequences: *composition* classes geared toward students from middle-class backgrounds who “arrive at school bringing with them the very assumptions about using language and literacy that the school seeks to inculcate and most frequently rewards” (Moss & Waters, 1993, p. 157), *basic writing* classes typically populated by minority and lower SES students who often enter postsecondary schools less prepared and more resistant than their middle-class peers (Accardi & Davila, 2007; Delpit, 1995; Ogbu, 1988) and *ESL* (English as a Second Language)/*EAP* (English for Academic Purposes) classes

filled with students from diverse cultures speaking different home languages, and with very different motivations and levels of previous academic experience (Rubinstein-Avila, 2003; Valdes, 2001).

Although all three sequences are typically administered by English departments, each has its own professional organizations, journals, conferences, teacher training programs and pedagogic theories; however, arguing that today's FYC students can no longer easily be classified into separate learning categories, Accardi & Davila (2007) state that, as "classrooms have diversified, mixed and blended, separated pedagogies are no longer effective" (p. 54). These scholars suggest that, in order to effectively meet student needs, instructors in all three sequences "... (re)enter the academy from our separate fields, bring our specializations, listen to one another, and use all of our resources collaboratively to continue to create new approaches" (p. 60).

Further, at many schools, a single instructor's course load may include classes from multiple sequences (e.g., 3 units of composition, 6 units of basic writing) and, finally, as Accardi & Davila also note, although their specific concerns and preferred methodologies may differ, instructors in all three class sequences share the same teaching objective; that is, enabling their students to achieve the appropriate level of AE proficiency to successfully complete their educations.

It seemed reasonable, therefore, to treat FYC literature related to instruction in any one of the sequences as equally relevant (or irrelevant) to the other two; accordingly, in my reading, I did not differentiate between the sequences. It must also

be noted that, rather than reiterating the work of the reviews mentioned above (Belcher, 2004; Connors, 1997; Goggin, 1994, 2000; Paltridge, 2004; Roozen & Lunsford, 2011), in the following section I present an overview of the most current literature in a very broad field in order to provide a context for understanding some of the concerns of and professional constraints imposed upon the participants in this research. In order to accomplish this, I have chosen to discuss what Cooper (1988) and Randolph (2009) define as both a purposive sample (outlining key issues in the field) and a representative sample of the discipline-specific literature.

## ***2.2 Fleury vs. Bazerman: The question of genres***

Throughout their history, “Freshman Composition” courses have been considered remedial, have performed a primary gatekeeping function in many universities and have been considered marginal to the central object of English departments – literary study – which was generally conceived in formalist terms. Students have been given a set of precepts and some models, then told to write – well (Russell, 1997a, p. 225).

When Russell wrote the above, he believed that, because of a new understanding of *genre* defined “not in terms of formal features but in terms of typified rhetorical actions based on recurrent social situations” (p. 224), FYC classes were poised for change. A number of colleges and universities had added WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum) programs which involved composition instructors and instructors from other departments in providing discipline-specific writing classes. One impetus for this innovation was Charles Bazerman’s research on the writing practices of social scientists and physicists (1988, 1994) in which he discerned clear differences that he related to

differences in the social function of writing in the disciplines.

In 2005, eight years after Russell's statement was published, Bazerman and Anthony Fleury traded articles in *Communication Education* with Fleury arguing that a narrow focus on genre (i.e., discipline-specific writing) in FYC is misguided, and that it should be remembered that in the academy there are "core styles of expression, exposition and persuasion [that] ... provide tools for understanding, performing, critiquing and resisting knowledge and identity production" (Fleury, 2005, p. 72). Bazerman countered with a review of his own and other research supporting genre-specific WAC instruction by demonstrating that faculty in different disciplines require different types of argumentation and writing styles; contending, therefore, that if FYC has as its goal preparing students for academic success in their chosen fields, instructors must adopt the WAC position.

The published dispute between the two is representative of a division in FYC literature. Linguists, rhetoricians, and graduate students looking for research topics in education have generally agreed with Bazerman; however, the WAC approach placed practicing FYC instructors in a difficult position. By 2005, funding for education had dwindled, and; given that it was no longer economically feasible for many postsecondary institutions to link English and other departments, maintaining and expanding WAC programs would have required FYC instructors to learn and, over two semesters, teach students the conventions for writing in numerous, unspecified disciplines. Additionally, if the Bazerman faction were right, not only the FYC

instructors' teaching careers but also the entire history of their discipline was based on a fiction.

Two broad divisions related to this debate are reflected in FYC literature. One contingent has accepted AE as a cover label for discipline-specific writing genres while, at the same time, recognizing that institutions' retooling all FYC classes and retraining instructors for WAC instruction is not likely to happen. A number of these authors have investigated the idea of academic genres in order to see what associated skills, such as genre recognition, might be taught in the FYC classroom (e.g., Clark & Hernandez, 2011; Devitt, 2008; Wardle, 2009). Others have moved on to the study of *transfer*, the process by which skills learned in FYC can be adapted by students to writing in other disciplines' genres (e.g., Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Driscoll, 2011; Moore, 2012).

A second group of authors write as if the WAC issue had never been raised. Some have retreated into quantitative studies searching for correlations between various characteristics of composition students, their writing processes and their resultant compositions (e.g., Dryer, 2013; Huang, 2010; Zhu, 2004); while others busy themselves with speculations on the meaning of various aspects of the writing process and the meaning of compositions themselves (e.g., Owens, 2001; Ratcliffe, 2005; Worsham, 2006). Finally, many author-instructors focus on ways to moderate the strict application of traditional AE conventions, and to tailor their instruction away from form and back toward content (e.g., Bizzell, 1999, 2000, 2002; Casanave, 2010; Hebb, 2002; McCrary, 2005).

As will become apparent, the authors of FYC literature are not only highly diverse in terms of their foci of interest but also in terms of the theoretical stances and methodological approaches they adopt. In this, the current literature would seem to indicate a certain degree of disarray in the field, a disarray one might predict will also be reflected in classroom practice.

### ***2.3 Genre and transfer studies***

The majority of genre studies focus on identifying the various genres (or social registers) most common in different fields of study using what Biber et al (2001) term MD (multi-dimensional) analysis. MD analysis consists of the statistical analysis of large bodies of text (corpora) in order to determine how linguistic patterns occur in various genres combined with qualitative research to identify the social function of these patterns.

Tardy (2006) reviewed the findings of 60 MD studies designed to investigate how various genres are learned. The genres examined in these studies ranged from business reports to English poetry and nursing care plans. With a commendable degree of caution given the differences in the studies' methodologies and in the genres they focused upon, Tardy compares differences and similarities between L1 and L2 students in genre learning. She finds, for example, that both sets of students appear to learn genre implicitly from reading discipline-specific literature; with L2 students consulting texts more frequently and using them more often as sources of discipline-specific

vocabulary and phrases. She suggests that L2 students may benefit more from explicit genre instruction than L1 students since, as a number of studies show, L2 writers are more receptive to instructor feedback.

Loudermilk (2007) applied MD analysis to the MBA Thought Essay, a writing assignment he finds representative of the “occluded genres – genres whose exemplars are private or confidential, and thus cannot be readily used as models” (p. 190); two other examples of this genre are research article (RA) peer reviews and RA submission letters. The author examines fifty-seven thought essays (student responses to popular quotes relevant to business management) and discovers that, although there are some common linguistic features, there is also a great deal of variation between them. He explains this by means of the *hybridity hypothesis* which states that occluded genres, if they are new and/or belong to groups with high turnover rates, are likely to exhibit features of multiple genres.

Meltzer (2009) examined 2,100 writing assignments submitted over a four-year period by 100 undergraduates each for social sciences, applied and natural sciences, business, and arts and humanities classes. He adopts the writing taxonomy of Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod & Rosen (1975) and, adding genres as “responses to recurring rhetorical situations rather than merely templates of form and format” (p. 243), focuses first on the term papers in his sample. He expresses surprise upon finding that the modernist (or traditional) term paper – graded largely on correct information, citation forms and grammar – is assigned less frequently than the alternative form – evaluated

for evidence of “exploration, synthesis and creativity” (p. 254). Less surprisingly, he finds that the short answer exam which comprises approximately one quarter of his entire sample is similar across all disciplines; that is, it is relatively genre-independent.

Molle & Prior (2008) also countered the “templates and taxonomies that many may still too readily think of when they think of *genre*” (Belcher quoted in Molle & Prior, p.563). Using an ethnographic approach only, the authors discover during a genre-driven, needs analysis study involving three very different academic disciplines – engineering, architecture and music – that, among other things, the genres they observe in use are multimodal and that many texts are actually hybrids – mixes of multiple genres.

The conviction that there are distinct, identifiable differences in the discourse styles common to various disciplines is, of course, implicit to genre studies. The research, however, is unclear on whether or not these differences are anything more than the regional accents of a common language, AE. In fact, Bennett (2009), after a review of 41 style manuals for writing in all disciplines, concluded:

... the single most important factor to have emerged from this survey of style manuals is the remarkable degree of consistency that exists as regards the general principles and main features of academic discourse in English (p. 52).

Written prior to, unaware of or dismissing Bennett’s findings, transfer studies incorporate the idea of genre and, like genre studies, often include both quantitative and qualitative data, providing interviews and/or surveys of students in support of various recommendations related to increasing their abilities to adapt the writing skills

learned in FYC to required writing in other situations. The statistics in the majority of these studies are based on coded, qualitative data; that is, subjective student perceptions either of the content of FYC classes or of their own success in other classes.

Moore (2012) presents a review of recent research on writing-related transfer, summarizing the main areas of inquiry. Interestingly, the reviewed studies generally assign responsibility for successful or failed transfer to student attitudes and perceptions that are largely beyond the purview of classroom instruction. The one issue raised that seems pertinent to instructors is the question of whether or not one could or should increase students' genre awareness by using, as FYC texts, "writing about writing" (p. 8).

Bergmann & Zepernick (2007) discuss their finding that students commonly believe writing skills learned in FYC do not apply to papers other than those assigned in FYC. Admitting that, in many ways, this perception is true and using the analogy of athletes who play one sport (e.g., basketball) then learn to play another requiring different skills (e.g., soccer), the authors speculate that, rather than trying to teach students how to write, FYC instructors should teach students "how to learn to write" (p. 142). This suggestion is presented without further elaboration.

Similarly, Driscoll (2011) examined FYC student perceptions related to transfer and found that, from the beginning to the end of the school term, student beliefs about how useful their FYC coursework would be in preparing them for writing in other disciplines declined significantly. Her recommendations to remedy this are, on the one

hand, detailed and, on the other, nebulous. She suggests following six steps to encourage transfer, beginning with encouraging students “to engage in metacognitive reflection about their writing and learning” (p. 28) and ending with ensuring that students “know how different skills connect to each other and how knowledge builds upon previous knowledge” (p. 33). Again, the author does not elaborate on how these goals might be accomplished in the FYC classroom.

Rounsaville (2012) discusses *uptake*, a term used first in speech act theory then in rhetorical genre studies, as it might apply to transfer in writing. After defining uptake as referring to the process of reader response, she stresses the importance of prior knowledge in uptake and suggests that, although it has been argued that FYC should focus on teaching genres students will be able to transfer to other classes, this begs the question of uptake; that is, how students either recognize or choose the most appropriate genre for a given writing situation. The author concludes that the topic deserves study.

Nelms & Dively (2007) examined the skills FYC students were taught by their instructors (in this case, thirty-five graduate English students), and how well those skills transferred to discipline-specific writing assignments. They found only low transfer and concluded that FYC instructors should: “... learn the language that their non-composition colleagues use when talking about writing with students”; “... reevaluate their own course goals, course content, and pedagogies and make transfer an explicit course objective,” and; “... learn specific strategies for teaching to transfer” (p. 228-229). Those

strategies are not discussed.

James (2010) studied transfer “climate” in EAP instruction, conducting semi-structured, small group interviews with 52 EAP students concurrently enrolled in other university classes. He found that, when EAP students’ perceived negative attitudes on the part of instructors and peers in those classes toward the efficacy of EAP programs, and/or when they failed to see a connection between their use of learned language skills and the grades they received, they felt less motivated to try out transfer skills. The author concludes that, if someone denigrates the skills students have learned, the students are less likely to attempt to apply them.

While one must respect a number of these authors’ suggestions for possible future directions in FYC research, it might also be argued that transfer studies, in essence, represent an evasion of the central debate characterized by the positions taken by Fleury (2005) and Bazerman (2005). If, as Fleury suggests, there is a core academic language, why should it require special training for students to adapt what they have been taught in FYC to other applications? The majority of those who have learned to drive a car can, without being encouraged by a third party “to engage in metacognitive reflection” (Driscoll, 2011, p. 28), adapt what they know to driving a pick-up truck. Conversely, if Bazerman is correct and what is termed *academic language* is actually a set of discrete, discipline-specific genres, one must question whether or not there is much in current FYC course content that is relevant enough to transfer to other classes. Either way, it is difficult to see how transfer research (at this stage of inquiry, at least) is

applicable to FYC classroom instruction.

#### ***2.4 Quantitative studies***

The majority of quantitative research reported in FYC literature ignores the question of genres. When genre is included, it is in the original sense of “form” and is not directly related to the social activity of a group. Gardner & Nesi (2013), for example, examined 2,858 texts produced by undergraduate students and found that, while the humanities and social sciences rely heavily on the essay genre (83% and 56% respectively), the life and physical sciences do not (18% and 10% respectively). The authors suggest that these findings have important implications for AE text and curricula development since, aside from personal narrative, the essay (consisting of an introduction, a series of arguments and a conclusion) is the genre consistently stressed in FYC classes.

More commonly, quantitative research in the field attempts to delineate the AE skills most critical to academic success, the characteristics of students which relate to AE proficiency, and to determine in what ways AE classes contribute to that proficiency. Data is generally gathered in four ways; from numeric counts of various metalinguistic features in academic papers, from large-scale surveys of students and/or of faculty who teach subjects other than AE, from syllabi and assignment handouts collected from courses other than FYC and from descriptive correlations made between various factors related to student writing, grades in subsequent coursework and/or institutional

retention rates. The problem with many of these studies, however, is that, although the sample sizes, tables, and statistics in quantitative studies are often impressive, the conclusions they support frequently are not.

A surprising number of articles are apparent self-reports of the authors' failed research designs. Donohue and Erling (2012), for example, applied MASUS (Measuring the Academic Skills of University Students) diagnostics to 220 student papers, grading four attributes: use of source material, structure and development of text, use of academic writing style and grammatical correctness. They subjected the resultant data to the Pearson's correlation test, analyses of variance and principal components analysis and, after several pages of tables and figures, conclude that "statistically verifiable insights into the impact on attainment of particular aspects of language use may not have emerged from the research" (p. 216).

Truscott (2007) also encountered uncooperative numbers in a study in which he attempted to convert the findings from qualitative studies on the effects of error correction on students' writing accuracy into quantitative statistics. He found that correction has a small negative effect and, possibly, also a small positive effect, adding that there are a number of variables in his analysis that potentially biased the results. Similarly, Rosenfeld, Leung & Oltman (2001) analyzed responses to questionnaires from 370 faculty members and 345 students at 21 US and Canadian universities. Subjects were asked to indicate which of 42 tasks related to reading, writing, speaking and listening were important in coursework at the graduate and undergraduate levels; all 42

were rated by all subjects as important.

Another group of quantitative studies report that their authors definitely reached a conclusion; the unanswered question is why they made the effort. Noble & Sawyer (2013), for example, conducted a correlative study that included the ACT Test scores, the grades received in developmental (or remedial) writing classes and the enrollment status of 118,000 students at 75 universities and colleges proving conclusively that, overall, part-time students derive more future academic benefit from taking developmental courses than full-time students do. The authors do not suggest what institutions might do in response to this finding; steer full-time students away from developmental courses; steer part-time students toward them? Similarly, Huang (2010) surveyed 432 graduate and undergraduate students, and 93 instructors, finding that instructors consistently rated students' writing skills lower than the students did; and, Hess (2012) used ANOVA, correlational, chi-square and multiple regression analyses to discover that there was a positive relationship between the number of English composition classes physics students had taken as undergraduates and their subsequent publication rates. As was true for the Noble and Sawyer research mentioned above, it is difficult to determine what recommendations these authors might make based on their findings that would positively impact student outcomes.

Finally, the largest group of quantitative reports demonstrates the obvious. Volpe (2011), for example, studied transcript data from 500 students at a community college and found that students who earned a C or lower grade in FYC courses were

more likely to drop out of college than those earning As or Bs. Volpe concludes that lower grades in FYC courses might enable institutions to track students at higher risk for completing academic programs and, therefore, to develop special programs that would lead to their retention; however, the problematic nature of this suggestion lies in the author's attribution of causality. Is Volpe suggesting that the lower grades the students receive leads to their leaving the institution (which would seem to present a case for the positive effects of grade inflation) or is it their failure to master AE which leads to substandard performance in other classes? Volpe expresses no opinion.

Graves, Hyland & Samuels (2010) studied 179 syllabi and found that there were large differences between disciplines in the frequency, purpose, and scope of writing assignments. Their conclusion is hardly surprising; however, the authors go on to suggest that FYC instructors inform their students of that fact.

Yeats, Reddy & Wheeler (2010) obtained the records of 806 freshmen; forty-five had used the writing center on campus, the remainder had not. They compared the two groups and found that, correcting for the disparity in sample sizes, the forty-five who had used the writing center did significantly better in classes than those who had not. Jesnek (2011) discovered that the effectiveness of peer editing is limited by the writing abilities of student writers and editors, while Adel & Erman (2012) tell us that undergraduate native English speakers use more varied lexical bundles in their writing than do non-native speakers. Yang & Sun (2012) point out that the correct use of cohesive devices in argumentative writing directly correlates with overall writing quality

and Riazantseva (2012) notes differences in the estimation of accuracy in L2 writing depend on how researchers define “accuracy.”

Admittedly, a great deal of time and painstaking effort went into many of the studies discussed above; however, although statistical software allows almost anyone to apply sophisticated tests to numeric data, the interpretation of those test results requires care. A significant correlation between variables does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship as Noble & Sawyer (2013), Yeats, Reddy & Wheeler (2010) and Volpe (2011) imply, and; the validity of attempting, as Truscott (2007) did, to change qualitative data gathered by other researchers into numbers then subjecting those number to statistical tests is questionable at best. Finally, as with the transfer research discussed in the preceding section, it is difficult to see in what ways most quantitative findings will benefit or even affect FYC students and their instructors.

Schon (2001) speaks of the choice between rigor and relevance, arguing that research should produce practical knowledge and that a scientifically “rigorous” research design in the social sciences almost invariably leads to trivial results; however, the publishing trend in a number of journals pitched to AE instructors leans toward the quantitative (Roozen & Lunsford, 2011). Haswell (2005), for example, argues that *all* AE studies should be “explicitly enough systematized in sampling, execution, and analysis to be replicated; and factually enough supported to be verified” (p. 201). This ongoing debate, reminiscent of that between the behaviorists and the cognitivists discussed in Chapter 1, is clearly not a concern of the authors of the composition literature discussed

next.

### **2.5 *Compositionist compositionisms***

There is one contingent of American composition instructors (although Bruno Latour, a French academician, is one of their leading lights) who have adopted the appellation, *compositionists*. The compositionists are largely involved in attempting to understand and describe the essence of the composition with readers, writers and communicative effectiveness peripherally interesting as factors which may help illuminate the shared, inherent nature of all writers, writing acts and writing contexts. There are modernist compositionists, postmodernist compositionists, ecompositionists and even apocalyptic compositionists, and; as reflected by the body of literature they have produced, they clearly have a great deal to say to one another.

Given the number of times it is cited and alluded to by the others, Bruno Latour (2010) wrote what is clearly the seminal compositionist article. Referring variously to the movie *Avatar*, the Climate Summit, the French Revolution, Dunkirk, the fall of Saigon, the structure of DNA, the H1N1 flu virus, the Communist Manifesto, Oedipus, Locke and Descartes, and sprinkling his essay with statements such as: “I don’t wish to embrace Walter Benjamin’s tired ‘Angel of History’ trope ...” (p. 485), Latour dismisses modernist and postmodernist composition studies to produce what he calls a “compositionist manifesto,” declaring that *compositionism* presents an alternative to critique.

I don’t mean a critique of critique but a reuse of critique; not an even more critical critique but rather critique acquired secondhand – so to speak – and put

to a different use (p. 474).

Having clarified his point, Latour turns to the processes involved in compositionism and, typifying Modernists as “fleeing in terror” (p. 485) from the past, he announces that:

[i]t’s no use speaking of “epistemological breaks” any more. Fleeing from the past while continuing to look at it will not do. Nor will critique be of any help. It is time to compose – in all the meanings of the word, including to compose with, that is to compromise, to care, to move slowly, with caution and precaution. That’s quite a new set of skills to learn: imagine that, innovating as never before but with precaution! (p. 487)

Cooper (2011), citing four books and articles by Latour and stating that her own argument “rests on complexity theory and on an enactive approach to the study of mind, also known as neurophenomenology” (p. 421), uses a speech given before the 2008 presidential election by then-candidate Obama to illustrate her definition of “agency.” Agency, she informs us, “emerges ineluctably from embodied processes; agency is inescapable for embodied beings” (p. 443) and this is what should be made clear to composition students (the embodied ones) because:

[w]hat they write or argue, as with all other actions they perform, makes them who they are. And though their actions do not directly cause anything to happen, their rhetorical actions, even if they are embedded in the confines of a college class, always have effects; they perturb anyone who reads or hears their words. (p. 443)

Lynch (2012), after discussing Latour’s proposal of a new way of imagining composition studies in association with a Scandinavian form of government, the *Thing*, as it might relate to the concerns of the apocalyptic compositionists (who, as their

appellation implies, argue that the only appropriate topics for composition center around the impending doom they perceive humanity now faces), cites an encounter with an FYC student who, in answer to his question of what she plans to study, replies that she wants to major in environmental science because she hopes to save the world. Lynch asks the reader rhetorically if he should tell her that “the *vir bonus* (or in this case, the *femina bona*) *dicendi peritus* is a myth?” or, conversely, should he assume that she is a realist who “wants to enter our academic Thing” (p. 473). He answers his own question by calling for apocalyptic compositionists to stop imposing disenchantment on each other and on their students, stating:

[l]et us therefore trade disenchantment for demoralization, which tells us that it is time to begin the work of composition again – always extending the concern and the franchise of our discipline’s Thing – even to the end of the world (p. 474).<sup>9</sup>

With rather less flourish, Sanchez (2012), discussing the need for an underlying theory that will specify what the subject of composition studies encompasses, summarizes a fellow compositionist’s thesis in this way:

[she] poses the idea that materiality – whether figured discursively or as the necessary ground of discourse (or as the necessary ground of the necessary ground of discourse) – becomes consequentially thinkable, knowable, or sensible only in the interval, as it were. (p. 240)

After concluding a twelve-page literature review in which he introduces the work of eighteen additional compositionists in a similar manner, Sanchez, ironically

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<sup>9</sup> I doubt Lynch actually meant FYC instructors should actively try to demoralize their students; on the other hand, perhaps he did.

the author of a book entitled “The Function of Theory in Composition Studies,”<sup>10</sup>

concludes:

[i]n the end, it may be that there are no sustainable theoretical contexts for conducting inquiry into writing, that there is not even shifting and unstable ground on which to stand the figure of the writing-subject, even tentatively. If so, then the question of what composition studies studies remains unanswered (p. 245).

The compositionists represent a fairly recent and substantive addition to FYC literature; however, as will become apparent in the survey and interview results from FYC instructors presented in the future chapters, their claims have no apparent relevance to classroom practice.

## ***2.6 FYC instructors on their students, their classes and AE***

The final group of literature discussed here is authored by practicing AE instructors who focus on suggesting methods and theories which either address improving traditional AE education or, recently, expanding the current understanding of AE to include alternative forms of discourse.

A certain percentage consists of articles which, mirroring a number of the quantitative studies discussed above, argue the obvious. Sullivan (2011), for example, builds on previous literature and his own experience in the composition classroom to conclude that students’ motivation to learn directly affects how well they learn; while Lee (2009) presents the answers of fifteen composition teachers to a questionnaire

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<sup>10</sup> For graduate students and masochists, the full citation is: Sanchez, R. (2005). *The function of theory in composition studies*. Albany: SUNY Press.

which support the author's contention that composition instructors who have too many classes and too many students do not provide as much feedback on student papers as do instructors not similarly burdened.

When data is used in support of the author's argument, it is most often anecdotal and personal. In general, however, these FYC instructor-authored papers are persuasive and thought-provoking and, in this group of literature (including in the two articles mentioned above), a noticeable shift in tone takes place; students are back as individuals, with histories, cultures, rights, aspirations, strengths and weaknesses. As a student, I welcomed the change. Additionally, the form of AE used in these articles is obviously intended to communicate rather than impress – again, a welcome change.

Davis & Shadel (2000) use experiences in their own classrooms to illustrate an approach to research writing that focuses on exciting students about inquiry rather than on teaching research and citation forms. Stating that the modernist research paper, "... positioned as the final, even climatic, step for students entering communities of academic discourse" (p. 417), stresses expertise, detachment and certainty over "uncertainty, passionate exploration and mystery" (p. 418), the authors argue for the incorporation of argumentative and personal essays expressed in multi-genre, multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural and multi-media modalities, arguing that, once having learned to enjoy investigation, students will be motivated in future coursework to acquire discipline-specific skills in order to communicate their findings. Morris (2012) also focuses on the importance of content over form, suggesting that students be

introduced to form as a rhetorical choice rather than as a prescriptive requirement. He recommends prewriting exercises such as brainstorming, group discussions and the visual representation of ideas so that students can understand that their own thinking is the most important component of research.

Shafer (2012) stresses student identity, discussing the political negotiations and confrontations situated in what Mary Louise Pratt first defined as the *contact zone*, the place where AE and the students' natural languages meet, illustrating this with the stories of two basic writing students who came to him at the writing center after their FYC instructor gave low grades to the drafts of their essays. One, writing about the music of his neighborhood, had used Spanish phrases and street terms in his draft; the other was upset by his instructor's refusal to accept Christian religious sources as the basis for his argument against gay rights. Shafer explains the dilemma of both students in terms of post-process theory which suggests that all writing is political and that successful writing is a social process involving a series of negotiated choices rather than the rigid implementation of set rules. He suggests that staff in writing centers focus on this aspect of student struggle rather than simply proofreading.

The authors of a number of the most compelling articles in the group refer to the work of one of the first FYC instructors to discuss the possibility that traditional AE is a restrictive language and one of the first to call for change. Patricia Bizzell (1999) began what became the first in a series of three seminal essays by stating that, in the 1980s, she agreed with David Bartholomae that "[w]herever students are in their language

using practices when they come to college ... what they must learn to do is write within traditional academic discourse” (p. 7). She still believes that there is a core academic language and that it should be introduced to students; however, she points out, in disciplines outside English, new academic discourses are “clearly doing serious intellectual work and are received and evaluated as such, even as they violate many of the conventions of traditional academic discourse” (p. 8). Bizzell then describes AE as a *grapholect*, a hyper-correct form of English meant to be written and read, but too elaborate to be spoken. She states that it has specific genres (here referring to written forms like the lab report and critical essay, not to social phenomena), and a prose style meant to convey a specific persona, objective, skeptical, and argumentative.

In contrast, she enumerates the hybrid AE conventions she derived from an examination of four scholars’ published work<sup>11</sup>: little or no use of the grapholect, cultural references used without exhaustive explanation, personal experiences used both to evoke emotional response and to illustrate points, offhand refutation employed rather than explicit attacks on other positions, and the use of humor and indirect statements. She suggests that FYC instructors who wish to incorporate hybrid AE instruction “create conditions in which students are encouraged to experiment with their own forms of hybrid discourse” (p. 17), then presents practical steps that can be taken in order to accomplish this.

In 2000, Bizzell presented an overview of the field of basic writing, citing the

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<sup>11</sup> M. Rose (1989) *Lives on the Boundary*; H. Fox (1994) *Listening to the World*; K. Gilyard (1991) *Voices of the Self*; V. Villanueva (1993) *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*.

initial phase when failure to adhere to traditional AE was seen as indicating arrested cognitive development, through the second phase when “basic writers’ difficulties are attributed primarily to clashes between their home world views and the academic world view ...” (p. 5), pointing out that students’ failure to reproduce traditional AE is still seen as a problem that must be remedied if they are to succeed in the academy. The third phase, she suggests, will include the wider acceptance of and FYC instruction in hybrid AE, concluding:

[i]f newly evolved composition pedagogies help to democratize access to the academy ... their ultimate consequences might be more far-reaching. Democratizing access may help along the changes in academic discourse described in this essay, thereby serving social justice – or at least, so I may be allowed to hope (ibid, p. 11).

In her third article on the topic, Bizzell (2002) reintroduced and strengthened the argument that traditional AE hampers scholarly progress. She illustrates with an article written by an eminent white historian on the topic of lynching. In the article, he considers his discipline’s silence – and the guilt he feels about his own – on the subject of what once was an almost institutionalized expression of white on black violence. The article was accepted for publication; however, the journal editor took the unprecedented step of also publishing the remarks of the six referees who had reviewed it. Many expressed concern over the emotion the author expressed and over the nonlinearity of his argument; two were concerned enough to recommend against publication. Bizzell argues that, without recourse to hybrid AE, the subject – an important one – could never have been addressed adequately. She concludes “... we

should be welcoming, not resisting, the advent of diverse forms of academic discourse” (p. 9).

Hebb (2002) agreed with Bizzell that “[t]he acceptance of hybrid discourses for accomplishing serious academic work will revolutionize the academy and create new and interesting intellectual possibilities” (p. 25); however, she points out that, while senior faculty may now be able to use hybrid AE, student work is still judged against traditional standards. Casanave (2010), writing of her experiences as doctoral advisor to three students writing nontraditional dissertations, also is unsure about the acceptance of students’ and untenured faculty’s use of hybrid AE; however, she cites Bizzell’s statement that new forms of academic discourse “allow their practitioners to do intellectual work in ways they could not if confined to traditional academic discourse” (Bizzell quoted in Casanave, p. 3) and suggests that, if Bizzell is right, “... then these new forms, whatever they are, are worth exploring (p. 3).”

Referencing Bizzell, Fernsten (2005) used the experiences of two basic writing students struggling with AE to support her contention that the power dynamics in classrooms negatively affect students’ ability to express themselves in writing. She suggests that the use and encouragement of hybrid AE and open political discourse in FYC classes would empower both educators and students to resist discriminatory and limiting academic language policies. McCrary (2005) recommended the use of hybrid texts, providing anecdotal evidence of their efficacy from his own basic writing classes’ use of magazines, literary non-fiction, and newspapers. Alluding to Bizzell and Mikhail

Bakhtin, he reiterates that there is value in hybrid language, illustrating this clearly by writing his entire article in hybrid (or mixed) AE; for example, “[n]onetheless, I contend that exposing students to hybrid discourse and encouraging dem to play around wif it, might help them to see that standard English isn’t the only language game in town.” (p. 89).

Although McCrary was published with “dem” intact, it would appear from the FYC literature that, if a practical paradigm shift is in process, the end is not yet in sight. While Bizzell and others struggle with *how* to shift FYC from its traditional role as gatekeeper to the academy toward its potential role as keeper of the contact zone, the genre and transfer proponents are still preoccupied with training students to generalize, the empiricists are still running their statistical packages, and the compositionists are still smirking at each other in the mirror.

### ***2.7 Implications for the present research***

There was a great deal to learn from the FYC literature. First, the field is widely divided, not as I had initially thought by differences in composition, basic writing and ESL/EAP pedagogies, and only partially, as I next thought, by the genre/core language debate. The primary division, as I now see it, is how students are positioned in these various areas of concentration. They are respectively the passive, flawed subjects of proposed training methods, neutral variables in objective studies, *jejune* figures provoking arch, passing comments from their betters, or complex human beings who, if

given the chance, may have something valuable to contribute to the collective knowledge.

I had a similar choice to make when discussing the participants in my own research, the FYC instructors, and it became apparent to me that the last approach was the one to adopt and maintain. Accordingly, the word “subjects,” as in “research subjects,” will not appear in the following chapters. Additionally, because FYC instructors have the most right to and potential use for the results of the survey, I determined that all 1,000 instructors initially invited to respond to the survey – whether or not they had chosen to participate – would be sent a preliminary report of the findings after the questionnaire response period ended.

For the same reason, the informal comments and observations made by the instructors and similar information gathered in face-to-face interviews with my local informants are included as significant contributions to this study. All written responses are also provided in appendices along with clear indications of how those comments were coded so that, whether or not my own inferences and conclusions are judged valid, the thoughts and opinions of those actually doing the work are available to their colleagues, and to future researchers who may agree with me that one of the best ways to begin investigating a subject is to ask questions of those most likely to know something about it.

Second, learning from the quantitative research discussed above, I decided not to subject the survey findings to complicated statistical tests since any apparent

correlation could be interpreted as implying a causal relationship when, in fact, an uninvestigated, hidden variable (or variables) might provide the true link. More importantly, I felt it critical to the research to be able to ask open-ended questions, the responses to which would then be coded in order to present simple summaries. Percentages and raw counts are forgiving of a certain degree of latitude in coding; however, when sophisticated statistical tests are applied to subjectively coded material, the risk of false precision is unavoidable.

Finally, this review led to a tentative understanding of why the instructors I had first spoken to had expressed such a lack of interest in the FYC literature. In a field which has a single, unified and explicit objective (helping students achieve AE proficiency), the research, related theories, suggestions and conclusions presented in the literature appear so divided as to be, in the main, mutually irrelevant.

This is unfortunate.

While it is farcical to suggest that Bizzell and Casanave might derive inspiration from Latour's manifesto, or that Shafer, Davis and Shadel (or, for that matter, anyone else) would modify their practice in response to Loudermilk's MD analysis of an occluded genre discovered in business school, a discipline's journals should serve, at a minimum, to provide that discipline's members with a general forum and with a sense of professional community. And, as I next discovered, FYC instructors are in sore need of both.

## CHAPTER 3: SURVEY – METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

### ***3.1 Introduction***

This section presents a summary of the data derived from the responses by 222 FYC instructors teaching at postsecondary campuses across the United States to an eleven-item survey soliciting information on academic writing instruction. As suggested in previous chapters, it was determined that an effective and previously untried method of making explicit the writing skills associated with academic English would be to ask the instructors charged with teaching those skills. Additionally, FYC instructors were judged to be in the best position, based on their classroom experiences, to indicate which of those skills were most problematic for their students, and to make recommendations about ways in which academic English instruction might be improved.

### ***3.2 Survey Design***

The on-line questionnaire, “English Writing Class Survey,” (Appendix A) was designed on SurveyMonkey; an on-line survey tool chosen because it is widely used in social science research and, hence, would be identifiable to many of the potential respondents. This tool also offers a convenient method for the recipients of a solicitation for research participation to remove their e-mail addresses from the researcher’s mailing list; that is, to “opt out.”

“English Writing Class Survey” was prefaced by an assurance that responses

would be encrypted using SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) and no identifiers would be attached thus completely shielding respondents' identities. The preface also included three explanatory statements regarding the mechanics of the questionnaire; that is, a respondent might skip any of the questions and still complete the survey, no answers would be registered unless and until the respondent clicked *Submit* at the end of the survey and, by clicking *Submit*, the respondent agreed that his or her answers might be included in the research report.

The number of questions on the survey was purposely kept to a minimum; it contained only eleven. Seven were multiple-choice (Questions 1, 2, 5, 7 – 10), two were restricted text-line (Questions 3 and 4), and two open-box items (Questions 6 and 11) were provided for comments. Questions 1 through 10 were designed to elicit information on one of three broad topics; in order as they appeared, these were institution profile, respondents' perceptions of AE instruction, and respondents' profiles. The topics were so ordered in an attempt to increase the approachability of the questionnaire for the respondents; that is, objective institution-related questions were seen as least intrusive and, hence, placed first. Items 3-6, which were expected to require the most time and thought, were placed in the middle of the survey, and; questions 7-10 regarding the respondents' individual positions, formal education, teaching experience and levels of engagement with professional reading were placed last. Question 11 was included in order to provide instructors with the opportunity to make any additional comments or clarifications they felt relevant. The minimum

estimated time to complete the entire questionnaire was five minutes.

### ***3.3 Participant selection and solicitation***

Two hundred accredited postsecondary institutions (two colleges and two universities from each of the fifty states) were selected from the website of the University of Texas at Austin.<sup>12</sup> Selection criteria for the institutions were: first, alphabetic precedence (A before B); second, the availability of an on-line course schedule listing English composition courses with associated instructor names. Five current English composition instructors were then selected from each of the 200 selected institutions' Fall 2012 course schedules (for a total of 1,000 potential respondents). Selection criteria for the instructors were: first, alphabetic precedence of the instructor's last name (A before B); second, inclusion of the instructors' e-mail addresses either in the course schedule or on the institutions' departmental rosters.

After IRB approval, an initial solicitation letter (Appendix B) was e-mailed to the selected instructors via e-mail. This letter introduced the researcher, outlined the purpose of the study, and briefly described both how the recipient had been selected and the topic of the questionnaire to be forwarded the following week. Twenty-four of these initial query letters were either returned as undeliverable or were answered by an instructor who declined to participate.

One week later, the second letter (Appendix C) was sent to the remaining 976 potential participants. This letter provided a link to the questionnaire posted on-line at

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ>

SurveyMonkey along with an estimate of the time it would take to complete it, a description of measures taken to ensure the instructors' anonymity and the statement that all 976 (regardless of whether or not they completed the questionnaire) would be sent an initial summary of the results within six months time.

The second letter ended by providing direct contact information in case recipients had any concerns or questions they wished addressed before linking to the questionnaire. Eleven instructors replied, expressing concerns about the authenticity of the study and requesting further documentation. I responded by e-mailing copies of the IRB approval letter listing the working title of the study, the name of the department and my name under the letterhead of the University of Arizona.

### ***3.4 Results***

Within six weeks after the link to the questionnaire was sent, 222 completed surveys were recorded. When two additional weeks had passed without additional responses, the survey was closed for a response rate of 22.7% overall (222/976). In the tables and figures below, overall percentages are calculated based on the total number of instructors who answered each question; however, university and community college-specific percentages are based on the total number of appropriately affiliated respondents.

#### ***3.4.1 Respondents' affiliations***

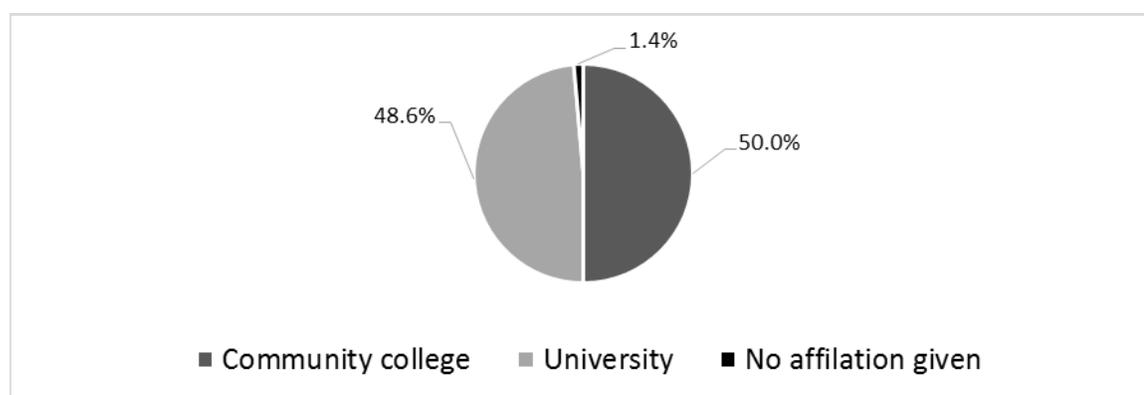
The first question asked each respondent to click on the best descriptor for his or

her institution – community college or university. It was judged necessary to be able to compare the responses to subsequent questions between community college and university instructors since, if significant differences were found between the two groups, these differences would affect the validity of generalizations from the survey results to FYC instruction as a whole.

The response rates from community college (111) and university (108) instructors were, for the purposes of this study, statistically identical (22.2% and 21.6% respectively), making raw number, percentile-based and visual comparisons of the information presented in the graphs below both valid and simple.

**Table 1: Respondents' Affiliations**

Community college	University	No affiliation given
<b>50.0%</b> (111)	<b>48.6%</b> (108)	<b>1.4%</b> (3)



**Figure 1: Respondents' Affiliations**

As noted in Table 1 and Figure 1 above, three instructors skipped Question 1; two stated under additional comments (Item 11) that they teach FYC at four-year

colleges, an option not provided for in the survey; however, they did complete the remainder of the questions. For simplicity of presentation, it was decided not to include these three sets of results in the tables and figures; however, the associated comments are included in Appendices D-G.

### **3.4.2 Text choice**

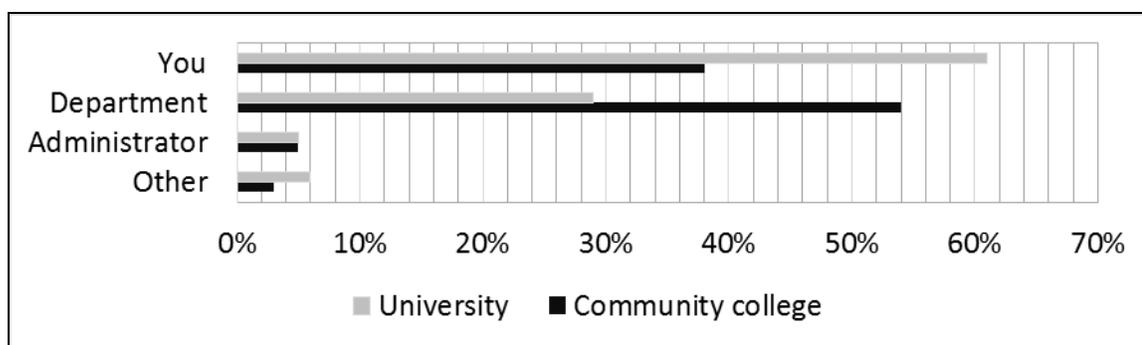
Question 2 asked respondents to indicate how FYC texts are decided upon at their institutions. This question was included to reflect the administrative structure in the respondents' departments; that is, to investigate whether instructors had the autonomy to decide text content, whether peer decision was the arbiter, or whether administrators unilaterally decided upon the texts. It was hypothesized that instructors who have the ability to choose or at least affect the selection of their texts might be more sanguine about course content and student outcomes than those who have their texts imposed.

The responses (111 community college; 108 university) to Question 2 indicate that university instructors are significantly more likely to choose their own composition texts while community college instructors more often have those texts decided upon by departmental committees. If the instructors' total autonomy in the adoption of course texts were a significant factor affecting their perceptions of student outcomes (i.e., effectiveness of their classes), one would predict that university instructors would express more confidence in those outcomes; however, as seen in the responses to

Question 5 (p. 74), this effect is not apparent.

**Table 2: Text Choice**

	Community college	University
You	<b>38%</b> (42)	<b>61%</b> (66)
Departmental committee(s)	<b>54%</b> (60)	<b>29%</b> (31)
Administrator(s)	<b>5%</b> (6)	<b>5%</b> (5)
Other (please specify)	<b>3%</b> (3)	<b>6%</b> (6)



**Figure 2: Text Choice**

**Table 2.1: Text Choice (Other)**

1	Full time faculty members may choose their own texts. Adjunct faculty must use the text selected by the department.
2	one class has books chosen by dept another I get to choose since I'm the only one teaching it.
3	One is chosen by the department, and the others are chosen by the instructor.
4	Certain texts are chosen by the Composition Director, others are chosen by the individual professors.
5	I choose from a list of approved texts.
6	WPA recommends texts, from which individuals are encouraged to choose their preference.
7	I choose my text from a list of texts approved by the department.
8	Dept committee selects a list of books, faculty choose a text from that list.
9	I can choose a text but the department chooses handbook.

Of the 219 total answers from college and university instructors, nine chose

“other” (Table 2.1). Those who chose this option either indicated that their text choices are limited (e.g., instructor chooses from an approved list) or are split between a departmental committee or an administrator, and the instructor.

### **3.4.3 Critical academic English skills**

Questions 3 and 4 are open-box items asking individual instructors to write in (rather than check off) specific responses to questions about critical writing skills. For analysis, the answers to Questions 3 and 4 were grouped into nine subdivisions; Table 3 below lists the titles and definitions of these groupings along with illustrative examples pulled directly from the instructors’ responses (with complete lists of all responses along with the coding assigned to them provided in Appendices D-G). One instructor only (one of the three who did not indicate affiliation) declined to answer this question.

**Table 3: Coding for Questions 3 and 4**

Categories	Definitions	Examples
<b>Logic</b>	critical thinking, critical reading, argumentation, avoidance of logical fallacies	“Analytical skills,” “Evidence of critical thinking and analysis in the composition,” “logical reasoning,” “development of evidence,” “strong logic,” “strong persuasive support,” “Ability to understand and participate in critical conversations”
<b>Thesis formulation</b>	devising a sound, clear and arguable thesis	“Formulating a clear, original thesis statement,” “clearly stating thesis,” “strong thesis,” “clear controlling idea,” “thesis construction”
<b>Composition</b>	producing a structured essay with introduction, body and conclusion	“Organization of essay,” “Ability to organize paragraphs coherently in an essay,” “ability

		to format written work in a formal structure," "ability to organize ideas and use transitions effectively," "clear organizational structure,"
<b>Basic mechanics</b>	using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and competent topic sentence and paragraph construction.	"Composing clear and complete sentences," "Correct use of grammar, "Grammar and punctuation usage," "Ability to use verbs correctly," "clear syntax," "Formation of structurally correct sentences and paragraphs," "Spelling"
<b>Research &amp; References</b>	finding and evaluating secondary sources, incorporating these sources into an essay appropriately (e.g., paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting), avoiding plagiarism, and using correct citation forms	"Correct use of citation form," "Ability to cite sufficient, authoritative, relevant evidence," "Proper quoting," "ability to read, understand, and synthesize research material," "Ability to integrate outside sources into an argument or explanation," "Research and documentation"
<b>Style</b>	recognizing and using language in the appropriate genre/register for the intended audience	"Appropriate Genre – suitable for aim and audience," "ability to analyze the rhetorical, structural, and stylistic features of a genre," "Ability to convey meaning while varying sentence structures," "Discovering the best ways to appeal to a given audience," "mature language"
<b>Process</b>	structured activities related to developing written work	"to apply strategies of the writing process to research essays," "Develop two- and three-level outlines," "awareness of the 3 parts (prewrite, write, rewrite) and 7 steps (prewrite, draft, respond, revise, edit, proofread, publish) of the writing process"
<b>Other</b>	recognizable but generally unteachable attributes	"Creativity," "Interest in the topic," "Stick-to-it-iveness," "the belief that one has

		something worth saying," "Original thinking," "Focus"
<b>Indeterminate</b>	responses too ambiguous to classify with certainty	"What I call the 'art of seeing' – everything," "engaging with sources," "development"

The first seven code groupings listed in Table 3 correspond to direct writing skills; the final two do not. *Other* is a grouping comprised of personal qualities or characteristics generally not included in FYC instruction; for example, "originality," "good time management," "determination." These responses have been included in the graphs below; however, the code, *Indeterminate*, was applied to phrases judged too ambiguous to classify objectively in any of the other categories. The most common phrases grouped under *Indeterminate* contain the words "develop," "developing" and "development." Unless these words were specifically elaborated (e.g., "develop a clear composition structure"), the responses could not be confidently classified. "Developing the topic," for example, might have been used by the instructor to refer to the writer's providing sufficient detail in the body of a composition to support the ideas presented (*Composition*); conversely, this phrase might have been intended to refer to the writer's deciding upon a composition topic or expanding a topic into an arguable thesis (*Thesis formulation*). On balance, therefore, it was decided to effectively omit these responses from Figures 3.1 through 4.2 rather than risk categorizing them incorrectly.

A number of the responses to Questions 3 and 4 fit and were grouped into more than one of the above categories; for example, "ability to clearly state central and supporting ideas" (*Thesis formulation* and *Logic*), "thesis and structured organization"

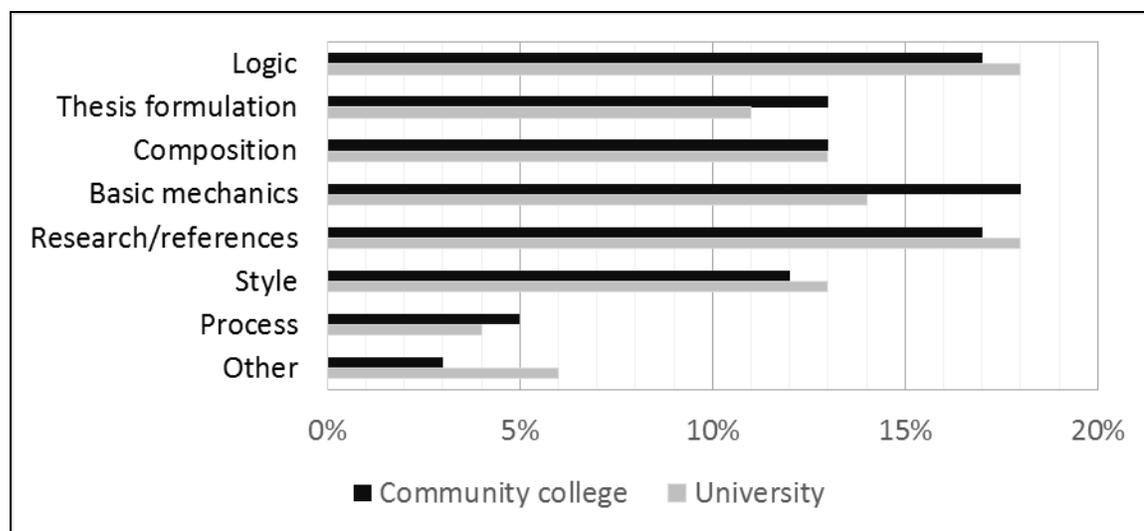
*(Thesis formulation and Composition)*; “Good sentence structure appropriate for audience” (*Basic mechanics and Style*); “strong argument using mature vocabulary and citing sources appropriately” (*Logic, Style, Research/References*). When a response was grouped in more than one category (as in the examples above), each element was counted and appears in the appropriate categories in the tables and graphs below. If, however, a response contained redundant elements, the entire statement was counted as a single occurrence; for example “correctly citing sources and avoiding plagiarism” was grouped and counted once under *Research/References*.

Question 3 provided instructors with eight, unnumbered text lines of 100 characters each in which to list the skills they perceived as most important to the production of a “good academic composition.” The answer lines were purposely unnumbered in order to avoid giving respondents the impression that they were being asked to rank writing skills in order of importance. Three examples of skills were provided in the body of the question; these were “correct use of citation forms, correct use of complex sentence structures, ability to clearly state a thesis.” These examples were given in an attempt to direct the instructors toward listing discrete writing skills rather than either grouping those skills (e.g., “using complex sentence structures and clearly stating a thesis”) or listing student attributes independent of their writing skills (e.g., “intelligence”). The risk of leading the instructors by providing sample answers was clear; for this reason, the examples provided were composed specifically to include what were hypothesized to be one tertiary (citation forms), one secondary (complex

sentence structures) and one primary (clear thesis) feature of academic writing. At the same time, it was recognized that only the analysis of results from the returned questionnaires would be clearly indicative of whether or not the examples had affected the instructors' responses: for example, if the three exemplars appeared in a majority of the responses and/or if the wording of the skills matched exactly.

**Table 3.1:** *Critical Academic English Skills*

Categories	Community college	University
Logic	<b>17%</b> (106)	<b>18%</b> (121)
Thesis formulation	<b>13%</b> (79)	<b>11%</b> (75)
Composition	<b>13%</b> (79)	<b>13%</b> (89)
Basic mechanics	<b>18%</b> (111)	<b>14%</b> (95)
Research/references	<b>17%</b> (100)	<b>18%</b> (117)
Style	<b>12%</b> (70)	<b>13%</b> (89)
Process	<b>5%</b> (28)	<b>4%</b> (28)
Other	<b>3%</b> (19)	<b>6%</b> (42)
Indeterminate	<b>2%</b> (14)	<b>2%</b> (11)

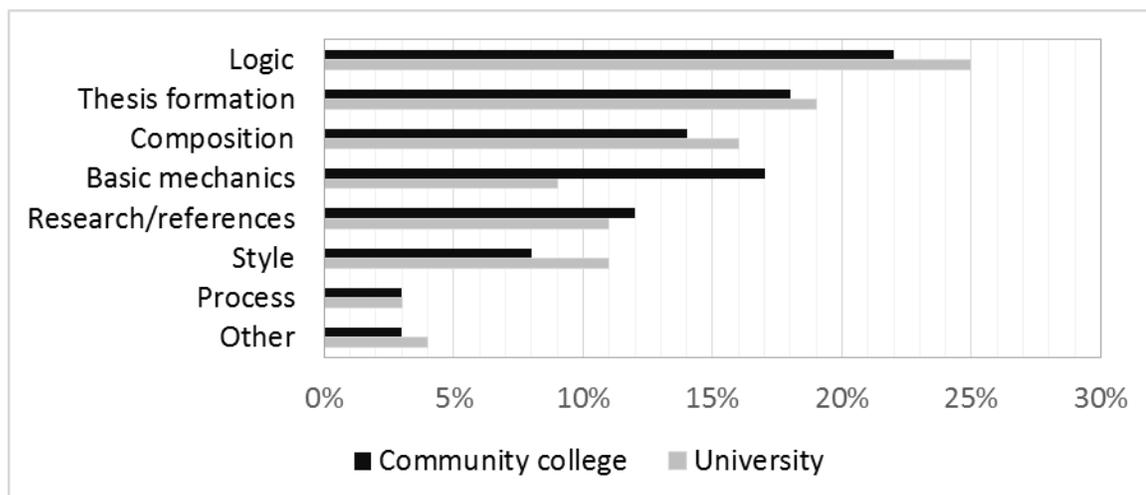


**Figure 3:** *Critical Academic English Skills*

Table 3.1 and Figure 3 indicate that the three skills incorporated as exemplars into Question 3 are not the three most frequently mentioned. This suggests that providing these examples did not appreciably skew the answers. Next, the responses indicate that college and university instructors tend to list similar skills as necessary to good academic writing with the ability to state a clear thesis and to write a correctly structured composition viewed as relatively less important than critical thinking and research and citation forms. In general, the concerns of the two groups appear similar; the one exception to this is the somewhat greater frequency with which community college instructors mention the importance of students' writing in Standard English; that is, employing standard grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structures. One university and two community college instructors skipped this question.

**Table 3.2:** *Critical AE Skills – First 3*

	Community college	University
Logic	<b>22%</b> (78)	<b>25%</b> (89)
Thesis formulation	<b>18%</b> (65)	<b>19%</b> (67)
Composition	<b>14%</b> (49)	<b>16%</b> (56)
Basic mechanics	<b>17%</b> (61)	<b>9%</b> (33)
Research/references	<b>12%</b> (43)	<b>11%</b> (39)
Style	<b>8%</b> (30)	<b>11%</b> (39)
Process	<b>3%</b> (12)	<b>3%</b> (11)
Other	<b>3%</b> (9)	<b>4%</b> (15)
Indeterminate	<b>2%</b> (8)	<b>2%</b> (7)



**Figure 3.1:** Critical AE Skills – First 3

Although Question 3 was designed to avoid ranking, it is intuitively valid to suggest that the first skills listed are among the first that occurred to the instructors. Accordingly, when the first three response lines to this question are presented separately (Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1), some differences in valuation can be noted. *Logic* is the most frequently cited necessary skill (22% and 25%) while *Research/references* drops from the first (university) and second (community college) most commonly cited skills to the fourth (university) and fifth (college) positions while *Thesis formulation* rises from fourth (college) and fifth (university) to second in both groups. At the same time, the gap between university and community college instructors' mentions of *Basic mechanics* widens noticeably (9% to 17% respectively).

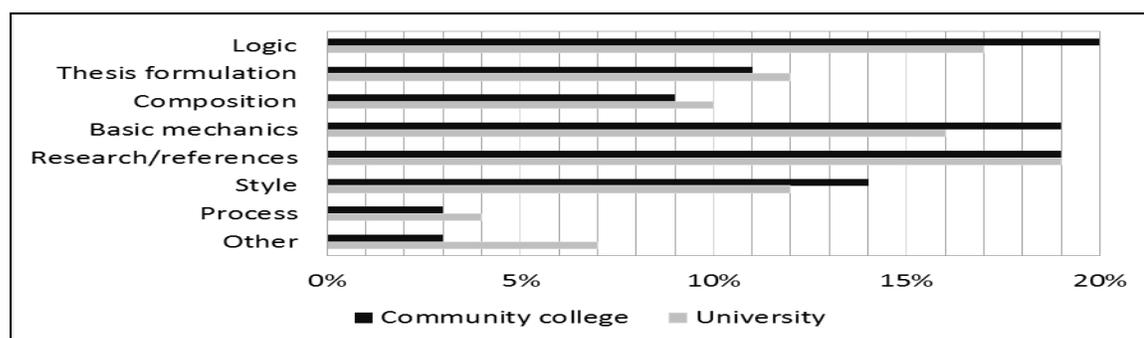
#### **3.4.4 Problematic academic English skills**

Question #4 provided five open-text lines of 100 characters each for instructors to indicate which of the skills they had enumerated in response to Question #3 seemed

most difficult for their students to master. The same coding schema (Table 3) was used for the responses to Question 4 as was used for Question 3. According to university and community college instructors (Table 4, Figure 4), the three most difficult skills for their students to master are critical thinking, basic mechanics, and research and reference skills. Basic mechanics are more important for college instructors (19%) than university instructors (16%); at the same time, although the numbers are relatively small, there is an indication that the character traits and attributes grouped under *Other* are almost as concerning to university instructors as are their students' abilities to structure compositions (7% and 10% respectively).

**Table 4:** Problematic Academic English Skills

	Community college	University
Logic	<b>20%</b> (58)	<b>17%</b> (54)
Thesis formulation	<b>11%</b> (31)	<b>12%</b> (37)
Composition	<b>9%</b> (26)	<b>10%</b> (32)
Basic mechanics	<b>19%</b> (54)	<b>16%</b> (48)
Research/references	<b>19%</b> (54)	<b>19%</b> (59)
Style	<b>14%</b> (40)	<b>12%</b> (36)
Process	<b>3%</b> (10)	<b>4%</b> (11)
Other	<b>3%</b> (9)	<b>7%</b> (21)
Indeterminate	<b>2%</b> (6)	<b>4%</b> (11)

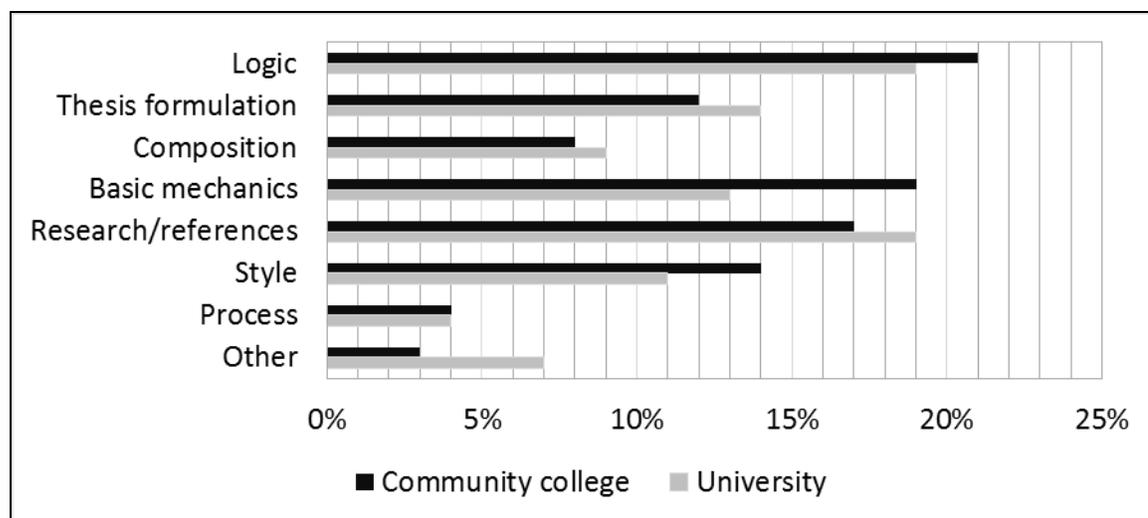


**Figure 4:** Problematic Academic English Skills

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 present the first three student problems listed by instructors, critical thinking again is at the top of the list for both groups. For university instructors, *Logic* is essentially tied with *Research/reference* (both at 19% with only a difference of two people) while, for community college instructors, basic mechanics is a major concern (19% as opposed to 13% for university instructors).

**Table 4.1:** Problematic AE Skills – First 3

	Community college	University
Logic	<b>21%</b> (54)	<b>19%</b> (50)
Thesis formulation	<b>12%</b> (30)	<b>14%</b> (35)
Composition	<b>8%</b> (22)	<b>9%</b> (24)
Basic mechanics	<b>19%</b> (49)	<b>13%</b> (34)
Research/references	<b>17%</b> (45)	<b>19%</b> (48)
Style	<b>14%</b> (35)	<b>11%</b> (27)
Process	<b>4%</b> (10)	<b>4%</b> (10)
Other	<b>3%</b> (9)	<b>7%</b> (18)
Indeterminate	<b>2%</b> (5)	<b>4%</b> (11)



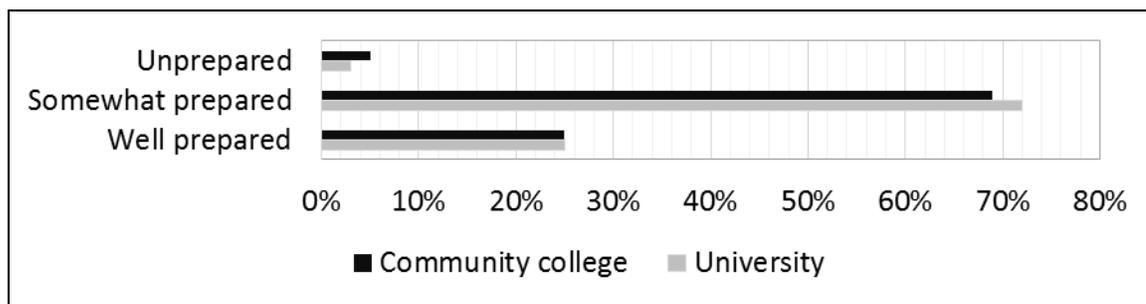
**Figure 4.1:** Problematic AE Skills – First 3

### 3.4.5 Student readiness

Question 5 asked how well the instructors felt their average students were prepared, after completing the FYC sequence, to write “acceptable” academic papers in subsequent classes. The choice responses for Item #5 were “unprepared,” “somewhat prepared” and “well prepared.” The response categories were purposely broad since, it was reasoned, the average student is either prepared or not, while the phrases “somewhat prepared” and “somewhat unprepared” are redundant.

**Table 5: Student Readiness**

	Community college	University
Unprepared	5% (6)	3% (3)
Somewhat prepared	69% (77)	72% (78)
Well prepared	25% (28)	25% (27)



**Figure 5: Student Readiness**

The self-assessments of the outcomes of programs in colleges and universities are similar, with the overwhelming majority stating that average students are somewhat prepared to write academic papers after completing the composition sequence at their institutions. Basically, both groups assess their students as equally prepared for writing

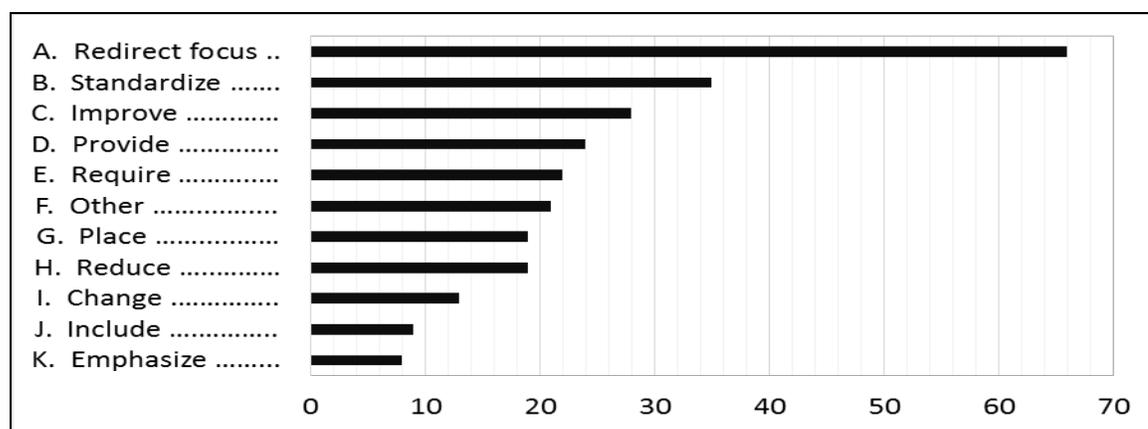
in other classes, 25% judging their students to be well prepared and only a small percentage (3-5%) believing the average student ill-prepared.

### 3.4.6 Suggested changes

Question 6 provided instructors with an open-text box (2,000 characters) for their responses to the hypothetical question of what they would do to improve student outcomes if they were put in charge of FYC programs at their institutions.

**Table 6: Suggested Changes**

A. Redirect focus of instruction	66
B. Standardize grading practices/clearly define course criteria	35
C. Improve qualifications of instructors	28
D. Provide a longer writing sequence	24
E. Require placement exams/provide remedial classes	22
F. Other	21
G. Place greater emphasis on basic mechanics/comp structure	19
H. Reduce class size	19
I. Change amount of writing/revision	13
J. Include current technology	9
K. Emphasize critical thinking	8
Total	264



**Figure 6: Suggested Changes**

There were 191 responses to Question 6 (Appendix H). Of these, 172 were classifiable while 19 were nonresponsive to the question and were designated N/A. A few of these 19, simply answered “none.” Others were generally positive about their existing programs. The following quote is representative:

The academic reading & writing program is excellent, & I am very happy with how this program is run. There are plenty of teaching resources and plenty of extra assistance for any student that wants more help (#3).

The remaining 172 were less sanguine. As was true of the answers to Questions 3 and 4, many of these classifiable responses fit into more than one group and so were counted in more than one category, thus yielding a total of 264 classified and counted response types.

For purposes of clarity in presentation, I have labeled Categories A through K in descending order of their frequencies in Table and Figure 6 above; however, for purposes of discussion, the following sections do not follow the same sequence.

***Categories K & J: Emphasize critical thinking & Include current technology***

Although the students’ need for instruction in basic mechanics is reflected in a majority of responses to Question 6, the equal or greater perceived importance of logic/critical thinking evidenced by instructors’ responses to Questions 3 and 4 is unexpectedly underrepresented. Only eight responses were grouped in Category K (*emphasize critical thinking*) placing it last in terms of classifiable suggestions for improvements in instruction while it was among the first in terms of both necessary AE skills and perceived student needs. The reasons for this are unclear; however, it might

be suggested that instructors' believe at least a degree of proficiency in basic mechanics is foundational to the ability to express logic/critical thinking in written work.

For different reasons, I was also interested to see that the inclusion of instruction in the use of current technology (Category J) was only mentioned by nine respondents. On the most basic level, spelling and grammar checkers, and bibliographic form software are widely available and frequently misused by students (from whence comes the title of this dissertation); while computer-assisted literature searches and the incorporation of visuals are now both givens in academic research. Again, one can only speculate on the reasons the use of current technology was not mentioned more often by the respondents: their own relative lack of expertise, a perception that their students are already familiar with what is available, limited access to the technology at their institutions, limited class time, or simply, because technology was lower on their list of priorities than other factors.

***Category B: Standardize grading practices & Clearly define/standardize course objectives***

The 35 Category B responses reflect the instructors' perceptions that both they and their students would benefit from an explicit consensus on what the specific objectives of the FYC sequence are. The following four comments are representative.

I might have some type of more formal departmental review of research papers at the last level in our sequence both to norm what we all view as acceptable and to more clearly define for the students what is acceptable" (#146).<sup>13</sup>

I would further clarify the differences between Composition I and II so that clear

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<sup>13</sup> The numbers appearing in parentheses following quotations are provided for reference to Appendix H.

and different objectives could be met” (#127).

I would work to standardize the curriculum across all sections of composition. It would enable us to build on knowledge we know students would have been exposed to in previous courses. This would encourage all of the instructors to work together to build the best curriculum (#159).

I would standardize criteria for expected competencies at each level of composition and critical reading and writing. As it now stands, there is much subjectivity involved in interpreting the “goals” of each level of freshman English. Subsequently, students sometimes repeat or entirely miss skills necessary for success in college. It is helpful to be able to select textbooks, create assignments and syllabi without department oversight, but clearer guidelines as to expected outcomes would be most helpful (#173).

It would appear that there is little or no general discussion of or agreement on what FYC course objectives are and, as it entails the inability to standardize grading practices, no general agreement on how to assess student outcomes. Overall, the Category B responses imply that FYC instructors perceive a lack of communication between themselves and their colleagues, and between themselves and the administrators of their programs.

***Category C: Improve qualifications of instructors***

The lack of communication among colleagues is also reflected in the 28 comments directly relating to the qualifications of their fellow FYC instructors. Adjunct instructors and teaching assistants were particularly mentioned. Two examples are provided as illustration.

I would want to pay our adjunct instructors more (with the current wage we can't get many competent people), and I would require them to have ongoing instruction in composition pedagogy. Just because someone has an advanced degree in English doesn't mean that person has any clue how to teach it (#148).

I would work to create a sense of responsibility to students among teaching assistants. TA's at my institution are all too ready to believe that our freshmen are dumb, disinterested, and not worth excessive energy and attention. As a result, many composition classes are dumb, uninteresting, and not worth excessive energy and attention! (#112).

At the same time, wide differences in theoretical orientation are also evident as the following examples show.

Hire a Rhet/Comp expert to guide the faculty (#51)

I would ... make sure all new hires had real English degrees which required a thesis of some length to be attained so as to minimize the sometimes pernicious influence (with all their theoretical silliness and talk of learning communities and writing across the curriculum) of those with English Education or Rhet-Comp degrees ... (#101).

Again, what is evident in the Category C responses is the distance between colleagues, a distance sometimes expressed with clear frustration.

***Categories E & G: Require placement exams/provide remedial classes & Place greater emphasis on basic mechanics/comp structure***

Although the responses discussed above expressed a degree of uncertainty about what FYC course content should be, the 22 responses grouped under Category E were clear on what the instructors felt was important and on why they felt the suggested changes were critical; i.e., FYC students lack the prerequisite ability to produce SWE (Standard Written English), making stand-alone AE instruction in the first semesters of college next to impossible.

Our university currently has neither ESL nor remedial writing courses, nor do we have a writing center. Given the average level of preparation that our students have (which is low), given the increasing number of transfer/non-traditional students at our institution (about 60% of our enrollment), and given the

increasing number of international/ESL students at our institution, implementing these three additions would be very helpful (#117).

I would raise the requirements for admittance into English 101 and offer needed remedial grammar classes. (#168).

I would require a higher competency level from remedial English classes (English 90) before allowing the students to move into English 101 ... (#173).

All my students seem to have passed high school in a daze. Most don't read and have no instinctual, automatic grasp of written English. I think I would require noncredit English (100) for all students (#185).

Reflecting the same concerns, 19 instructors stated that, rather than raising placement requirements or sending students into remedial courses, more emphasis should be placed on basic skills instruction in FYC classes (Category G).

I would reduce the quantity of required writing during the first semester to devote more time to language skills and paragraph development (#31).

If students cannot master the basics of sentence structure, paragraph structure, and essay organization, understanding various rhetorical forms is useless (#42).

Students still need to spend more time on coherence and grammar. If they don't have the tools, they can't do the trade (#139).

The general perception among these respondents is that their students are underprepared for postsecondary writing instruction and require additional help. The same perception apparently motivates the two suggestions below.

***Categories D & H: Provide a longer writing sequence & Reduce class size***

The responses placed into Categories D and H were cohesive in opinion; that is, as the labels indicate, no one expressed the opinion that fewer hours should be devoted to FYC or that class sizes be increased. The 24 comments which called for a longer

writing sequence provided similar explanations for the perceived need for change. The following are representative.

Three hours a week for 16 weeks is not enough time to give these students the skills necessary for college success (#39).

Two semesters is not enough to correct years of poor instruction. I know this sounds as though I am slamming the high school teachers, but I started off as a high school teacher and I know what needs to be done (#16).

The solution I've argued for – unsuccessfully – is a two-semester sequence: a first semester of critical reading and discussion (with writings focused more on summary of readings), and a second semester of argumentative writing. I don't think that our program is doing things "wrong," only that it's damn hard to get all of our objectives "right" in a mere 15 weeks (#141).

I'd add a third semester of required composition class. In the final semester, students would continue to hone the skills they'd developed earlier and would emphasize developing their own clear style as well as writing for different audiences (#128).

The Group D responses call for institutional changes that would allow more time for FYC instructors either to address students' inadequate preparation for basic college writing (also reflected in the 22 Category E responses discussed above which called for stricter placement requirements and the addition of remedial classes) or to provide additional instruction in specific types of writing (e.g., argumentation) and in genre recognition.

Lack of adequate time is also a factor in the 19 responses grouped in Category H (*smaller class sizes*). In these comments, however, it is not general class topics that the instructors mention; rather, it is their inability to give individual students enough attention.

Smaller classes! It's impossible to give high-quality feedback on each paper when there's eighty or so at a time (#108).

Ideally, class sizes would be smaller to give more time for individual feedback (#17).

Keep class size low so as a teacher I can devote more time to individual instruction through tutoring and conferencing about their written work (#19).

The first thing I would change is reducing the class size to 15 students or less. Smaller class sizes would allow more individualized attention and help instructors to concentrate on each student's abilities and weaknesses (#77).

It might be suggested that feedback and individualized instruction/attention in the above representative examples of Category H refer to separate motivations for reducing class size, with *feedback* referring to the instructors' ability to provide adequate written comments on students' work, and *individualized instruction/attention* referring to in-person interactions such as conferencing and tutoring. For the purposes of this study, however, the distinction is moot; providing written *feedback* in a writing class – suggestions for revision, editing, etc. – is one of the most common forms of individualized instruction.

In these terms, it is daunting to picture the average FYC instructor workload. Eighty student papers of, conservatively, five pages each translates to an instructor's receiving four-hundred pages of student writing each time an assignment is completed. With reference to the skills listed by the instructors as most critical to AE proficiency, in addition to correcting basic mechanics, they are reading and grading students on evidence of critical thinking, formulation of theses, research and citation skills, and

appropriate composition structure. In addition to this, instructors feel it important to provide individualized comments on their students' work. As can be seen from a number of the other Category H comments (and as will become even more evident in the following chapter of instructor interviews), this presents an overwhelming workload, one most bitterly felt by adjunct instructors who often are paid an hourly wage based on the number of hours they are in class and are not paid for grading or other class preparation.

***Category I: Change amount of writing/revision***

Thirteen instructors addressed the amount of writing and revision that should be required; however, there was a difference in opinion among them with six instructors explicitly calling for fewer writing assignments – understandable in light of the discussion above – and four calling for more, while three called for increasing the amount of required revision without specifically referencing the amount of original student writing that should be assigned.

***Group A: Redirect focus of instruction***

By far the largest number of comments (66) either directly reflected or contained an element reflecting dissatisfaction with the current FYC instructional focus at the respondents' institutions; however, the suggestions made to redirect and improve upon that focus were conflicting. Thirteen of these comments specifically mentioned changing the texts used in the FYC sequence.

I think that I would use a different text book for Freshman Composition. As a

whole our department uses "Writing Analytically" by Rosenwasser and Stephens and my students find it incredibly difficult to understand (#6).

I'd select one good reader with a lot of sample essays and keep the Norton Field Guide we've been using and scrap the rest of the supplementary materials students are required to buy at my school (#101).

Allow faculty, in conjunction with the library and resources management, [to] prepare their own textbooks from handouts and readings they are likely to use, rather than using proscribed texts that may or may not work with the teacher's philosophy (#183).

Twelve others implied that text changes were necessary, stating that they recommend incorporating WAC principles and genre recognition by assigning writing and reading based on material from classes in other disciplines.

The second mandatory year should be dedicated to writing across the curriculum (writing for the sciences, humanities, social sciences and business) (#25).

I would ... seek to place students in composition classes in cohorts based on their major / other interests. Composition instructors could then more specifically develop the skills that the students will need in their later classes and career (#34).

Reading and writing might be taught best in conjunction with a course for another discipline. Students would learn the content in biology, for example, the reading teacher would work with them on reading to learn and researching, and the composition teacher would work with them on demonstrating learning through writing (#107).

I would pair Writing classes with subject matter classes. A writing class could be paired with Psychology. In this case, the Psychology class would have numerous writing assignments and the writing process for those assignments would take place in the Writing class (#184).

An additional eighteen comments also allude to text changes; however, the stress in these comments is placed on changing the types of reading and writing

prompts students are given. Interestingly, this group is split almost in half between those (8) who feel it important to focus specifically on academic writing to the exclusion of expressiveness and those (10) who feel it more important to emphasize student self-expression and creativity than to focus on traditional argumentation. The examples below illustrate these contrasting positions.

Redevelop the composition 1 course so that it is more of an academic writing course. The course we offer now is more of a psychology course that focuses on the student's 'self development' through writing rather than learning the tools of academic writing (#50).

Too many students and instructors believe that they are teaching creative, touchy-feely personal types of writing. We need to create business and professional communicators not getting in touch with self (#160).

Successful writers, in spite of their occasional failures, will find that writing will allow them to achieve what Maslow calls self-actualization. Successful writing will usually involve both personal and intellectual growth. (#152)

Many nonfiction essays are fine, but nothing gets a conversation going like a great piece of fiction. With fiction, you can get into the big questions -- existential questions about life and making meaning -- that students, especially students on the brink of adulthood, deal with on a daily basis (#169).

Five more instructors indicated that, rather than shifting from one focus to another, the field of study should be widened; an illustrative example is:

... rather than teaching to an "argument paper," I would prefer that students learn about rhetorical situations and audiences, skills that can help them write a traditional argument paper, yes, but that can also help them design a web site, create a visual presentation, write a speech, or interview for a job (#30).

Finally, there were twenty comments that stood alone. These ranged from pragmatic suggestions, such as: "reduce the amount of time in class on peer review

(#80),” “... require a library component taught by librarians” (#93) and “[f]ind a better way of providing books to students, since textbook costs are so high” (#124) through suggesting the adoption of specific pedagogic approaches as in the following three examples.

The Traditional Workshop approach to teaching students would be implemented because students need to interact systematically with their writing and critical thinking, instead of merely creating hit or miss outcomes (#143).

Emphasize the process-oriented approach to the teaching of composition, which I have been using successfully since 1974 (#172).

I would encourage the other faculty to teach their composition classes using the Writing Workshop model ... (#175).

Finally, in this group were several unique and ambitious suggestions for improving FYC student motivation.

I would FIRST provide a broad cultural overview of human development in four areas to all students, and in this order: anthropological -- historic social -- historic political -- present global (#136)

Prioritize the direct connection and communication of beginning composition skills, assignments, topics, and rhetorical modes to students’ ability to think, create, communicate, and therefore succeed in college, in their professional goals, and in life. Illuminate the relevance of students’ writing! (#7).

In general, the Group A responses were interesting both in terms of their number (66) and in terms of their lack of agreement on many points. It would seem that there is a shared perception among instructors that FYC classes at their institutions could be improved, a perception also supported by the majority who answered Question 5 by saying that their students were only somewhat prepared for academic writing after completing the composition sequence. At the same time, there is no

apparent agreement on how best to achieve that improvement and, in a number of instances, their suggestions are diametrically opposed.

***Other (Group F)***

Finally, a number of the comments were either completely or partially unique: many speaking more to the respondent's frustrations with their colleagues, their institutions and the economics of education than to possible improvements in the classroom. In a number of these, a degree of hopelessness was apparent.

I'd try to get administrators and other faculty to understand what an incredibly labor-intensive class comp is (#90).

More support for students -- financially and academically. When students are working full-time job[s] and going to school full time, it's impossible for them to spend the time on school that they need (#108).

As long as we're looking at the bottom line of dollars instead of a quality education, we will not be able to effect such changes. Education is an investment, not a revenue stream. People (even educators) find this idea difficult to process in today's national climate of declining state support for public education. (#82).

Summarizing the results of the responses to Question 6, many FYC instructors express the feeling of being overwhelmed by large classes, unprepared students and the lack of clear direction as to what course content should be and on how student outcomes should be assessed, sharing the perception that there is inadequate communication between themselves and their colleagues on these issues. This lack of communication is also reflected in the many comments that clearly question their colleagues' teaching qualifications (most particularly those of adjunct instructors and

teaching assistants) and, although the respondents offer suggestions on pragmatic changes, such as hiring new faculty, choosing new texts or changing teaching approaches, there is no general agreement on what types of hiring, texts or new approaches should be adopted.

Many similarly discuss a lack of communication with and direction from administrators in terms of course content and assessment methods, with a significant number expressing the belief that these administrators – as well as faculty in other departments – do not value what FYC instructors do and do not understand how hard they work.

The general impression one receives is of a group of highly committed, teaching professionals who feel as if they have been left on their own to teach a subject they know is critically important to student success but that they (and/or their colleagues) are, for a number of reasons, blocked from teaching well.

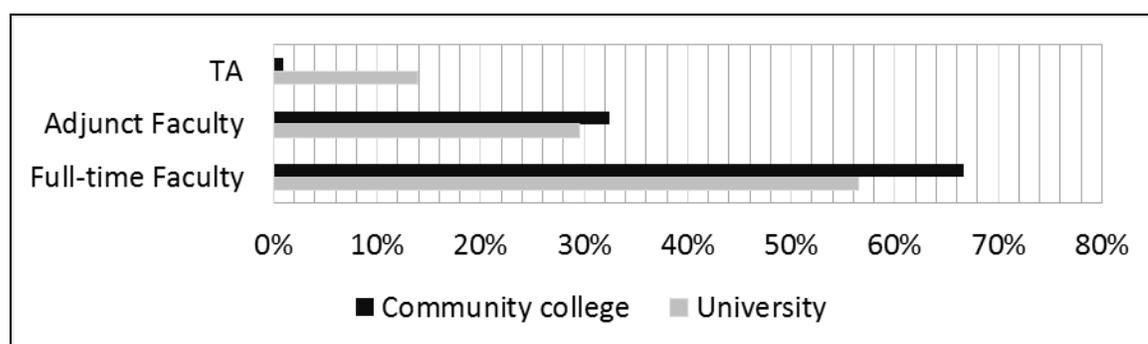
#### ***3.4.7 Employment status***

Question 7 asked each instructor to describe his or her teaching position as either teaching assistant, adjunct faculty member or full-time faculty member. The responses (Table 7 and Figure 7) suggest that, while it is equally likely that an adjunct faculty member will be found teaching FYC at either a community college or a university, it is less likely that a university's FYC class will be taught by a full-time faculty member than that a community college FYC class will be. A bias in the sampling method,

however, makes it possible that both TAs at universities and adjunct faculty at community colleges are underrepresented in this study. Course schedules are usually prepared at least six months in advance, at which time unassigned classes are commonly listed as taught by “Staff.” TA’s and short-term or newly hired adjunct faculty tend to be assigned classes much closer to the beginning of the term; therefore, their names do not appear in the schedules. Since potential participants’ names were selected from those schedules, full-time faculty and long-term adjunct faculty were more likely to be solicited for participation than those in the two other categories at the same institutions.

**Table 7: Employment Status**

	College	University
TA	<b>0.9%</b> (1)	<b>13.9%</b> (15)
Adjunct Faculty	<b>32.4%</b> (36)	<b>29.6%</b> (32)
Full-time Faculty	<b>66.7%</b> (74)	<b>56.5%</b> (61)



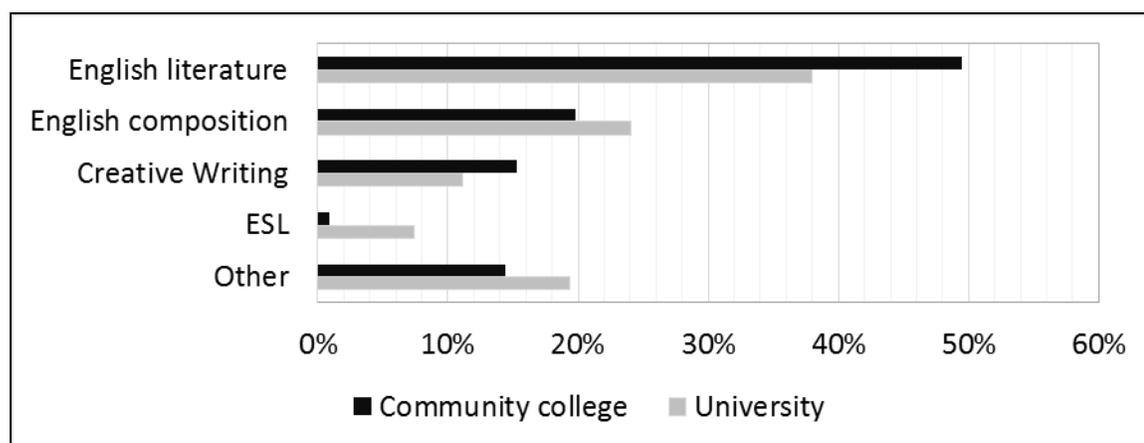
**Figure 7: Employment Status**

### 3.4.8 Formal education

Question 8 requested a description of formal academic training, providing five choices: “English literature,” “English composition,” “Creative writing,” “ESL” and “Other.” If the instructor chose “Other,” he or she was asked to elaborate in the provided open-text line.

**Table 8:** Formal Education

	Community college	University
English literature	<b>49.5%</b> (55)	<b>38.0%</b> (41)
English composition	<b>19.8%</b> (22)	<b>24.1%</b> (26)
Creative writing	<b>15.3%</b> (17)	<b>11.1%</b> (12)
ESL	<b>0.9%</b> (1)	<b>7.4%</b> (8)
Other (please specify)	<b>14.4%</b> (16)	<b>19.4%</b> (21)



**Figure 8:** Formal Education

Table 8 and Figure 8 indicate that formal training in composition pedagogy is not a critical requirement for FYC instructors; only 48 overall list their major field of study as *composition* while eight mention training in composition under *other*. The majority of FYC instructors at both universities and community colleges indicate their major focus to be literature and/or creative writing; with eighteen including literature and/or creative

writing under *other*. Journalism, psychology, family therapy, anthropology, music, education policy, “social science” and law majors are also listed.

It might be suggested that the diverse educational backgrounds of the respondents is at least a possible explanation for the disparate views and tensions evident from their responses to Question 6 above. It should be noted, however, that no clear correlations were apparent between the respondents’ stated educational backgrounds and their suggestions for ways to improve AE instruction.

**Table 8.1:** *Formal Education (Other)*

College	University
Literature, linguistics and creative writing	linguistics, some ESL teaching experience
Journalistic writing, English Comp, and creative writing	Economics
English lit, composition, and creative writing	Creative writing, as well as literature in English
I am equally trained and teach Composition, English Literature, and Creative Writing	I focused on academic and creative writing.
Professional writing	documentary editing, American literature, creative nonfiction
Rhetoric	Rhetoric and Design, specifically visual/verbal rhetoric
Journalism and Mass Communication	Composition and remedial composition
Writing and education	Rhetoric and Professional Communication
American Literature	Marriage and family therapy
English Literature and Linguistics	Creative Writing AND English literature
Communication	Creative writing M.F.A. and Literature M.A.
Language studies/language acquisition	Literary theory
American literature	English Literature, Clinical Psychology, and Education (including special education)
Rhetoric	Professional / technical communication + Composition

Have JD, have written nonfiction books	My PhD is in Lit, but one of my minor fields of study was composition and rhetorical theory and I was trained in composition pedagogy as a TA.
World Literature	PhD in Curriculum, Teaching, and Education Policy
	Rhetoric and Composition
	Social Science
	English and Commonwealth Literature and Rhetoric and Composition
	All of the above
	music/anthropology

### ***3.4.9 Postsecondary teaching experience***

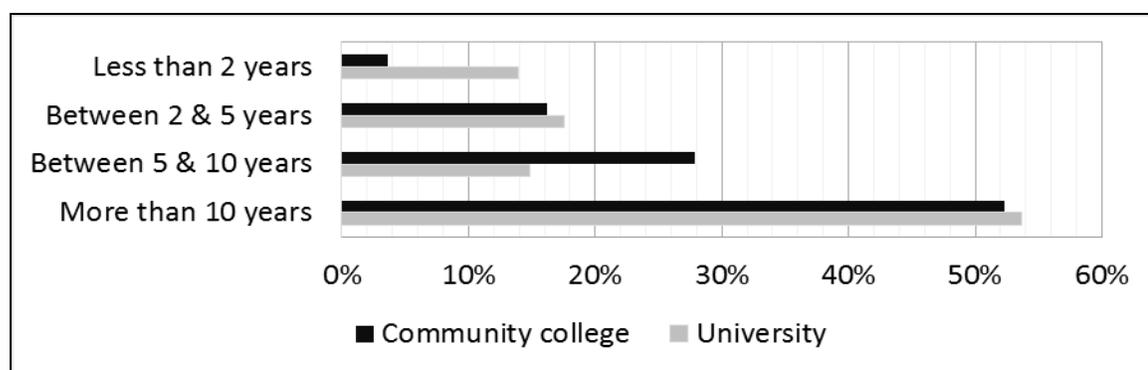
Question 9 presented four multiple choices for the instructors' postsecondary English teaching experience: less than 2 years, between 2 and 5 years, between 5 and 10 years, and more than 10 years.

The majority of respondents from both types of institutions have been teaching for more than ten years (Table 9 and Figure 9). The relatively large number of people teaching composition classes for less than two years in universities is accounted for by the fifteen university TA's who responded to the survey. At the same time, course schedules not listing short-term or newly hired adjuncts (the sampling bias mentioned above in conjunction with the results of Question 7) might have caused the average experience level of composition instructors to appear greater in this study than it actually is. In short, not counting teaching assistants, the years of postsecondary English teaching experience of university and community college instructors who responded to the survey are roughly equivalent; however, nothing further can be generalized from

the answers to this question.

**Table 9:** Postsecondary Teaching Experience

	Community college	University
Less than 2 years	<b>3.6%</b> (4)	<b>13.9%</b> (15)
Between 2 and 5 years	<b>16.2%</b> (18)	<b>17.6%</b> (19)
Between 5 and 10 years	<b>27.9%</b> (31)	<b>14.8%</b> (16)
More than 10 years	<b>52.3%</b> (58)	<b>53.7%</b> (58)



**Figure 9:** Postsecondary Teaching Experience

### 3.4.10 Professional books and journals

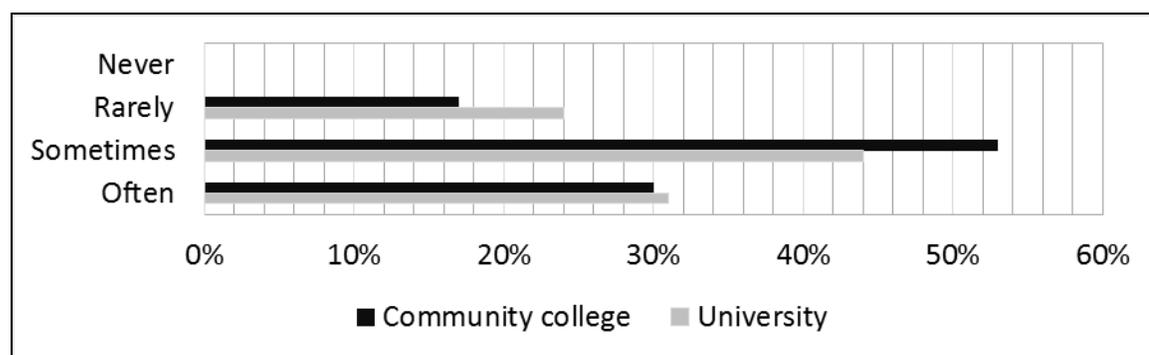
Question 10 asked the instructor to indicate how often he or she read books or journals related to FYC instruction. Four frequency choices were provided: “never,” “rarely,” “sometimes” and “often.” Although the lines between the last three categories are highly subjective, it was felt that more typical frequency categories (e.g., once a year, two or more times/year, once a month) might force the respondents to choose between what are possibly non-representative options; that is, subjective, in relation to this question, was adjudged superior to false.

Unexpectedly, community college instructors report that they read professional

journals somewhat more often than university instructors. Given the fact that the university FYC sample includes fifteen teaching assistants, it might be expected that, as graduate students, they would read professional books and articles more often as part of their coursework and, hence, would have driven up the university numbers; this is, however, not the case. A cross-tab run between Questions 7 and 10 indicates that the university TAs in the sample report that they read professional journals with somewhat less frequency than university faculty (31.25% to 24% *rarely*; 43.75% to 44.44% *sometimes*; 25% to 31.48% *often*).

**Table 10:** Professional Books and Journals

Frequency	Community College	University
Never	<b>0%</b> (0)	<b>0%</b> (0)
Rarely	<b>17%</b> (18)	<b>24%</b> (26)
Sometimes	<b>53%</b> (58)	<b>44%</b> (48)
Often	<b>30%</b> (33)	<b>31%</b> (34)



**Figure 10:** Professional Books and Journals

The probable explanation for this was found when a correlation was found between the answers to Questions 7 and 8; i.e., the majority of TAs are literature majors.

The time they have to devote to professional reading is most likely spent in reading literature and not FYC instruction journals.

Given the subjective categories provided the respondents (as discussed above), it is difficult to attach much meaning to these findings at this point; however, I would suggest that it might be interesting to ask a similarly phrased question of a group of university and college instructors in another discipline and to compare the two samples.

#### ***3.4.11 Additional comments or observations***

Question 11 consisted of a 2,000 character open-text box available for any additional instructor observations. It was assumed that responses to this item would, in all likelihood, be so broad as not to permit categorization, coding and analysis for subsequent discussion; however, it seemed important to provide space for feedback on this study, clarification of previous answers, complaints, insights or any other matters the instructors wished to address.

There were 75 responses to this item (Appendix I). Many offered comments on the study; others clarified responses made to previous questions while still others offered their observations related to instructor working conditions, postsecondary education in general and professional journals. These were left unclassified; however, some clear tendencies are evident.

A number of instructors expressed the opinion that, no matter what happens in the FYC classroom, students are unable to succeed because they lack the necessary

preparation. As was true in the comments attached to suggestions for FYC improvement (Question 6 above), the lack of student preparation was mentioned frequently; however, in these responses, the general tenor shifted away from “what can be done” to “what is wrong” and “who is to blame.” A number assigned public schools the responsibility for students’ poor writing skills:

I have seen a significant drop in the ability to write effectively over the past ten years. My concern is that these students do not learn how to write throughout their years in public school anymore (#8).<sup>14</sup>

... too many of my students don’t really know how to do homework. Evidently, they have never had to sit still by themselves and focus on something for more than about 10 minutes (#40).

Others ascribed inadequate student preparation to increased student diversity, open admissions policies, and poor placement and testing policies:

The number of students with language issues has grown exponentially. Many have disabilities; some speak English as a second language; some have never had their writing thoroughly examined and evaluated (#25).

We can’t turn away the students who are unprepared so they wind up failing the course (#66).

Administrators are allowing more unqualified students into composition classes via testing and placement. Students that belong in developmental classes are placed in freshman composition (#47).

The majority of complaints, however, centered around the policies and politics of administrations perceived by the respondents to be more focused on the economic bottom line than on education. The following statement is illustrative:

I find that increasingly, state institutions are being dictated to and governed

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<sup>14</sup> Reference number to Appendix I

from above. The administrative pressures are not student centered. I am required to attend meetings where students are referred to as “customers,” and are expected to pass without sufficient competency. I teach a blue collar student body and I am convinced that the system wants to only train these people as workers, rather than thinkers (#21).

These same policies are seen as directly affecting faculty working conditions with a number of respondents stating that they cannot live on what they earn. A full-time instructor spoke of the increasing use of part-time (adjunct) faculty in community colleges, stating that:

Acknowledging that almost all colleges and universities are relying more and more on part-time instruction does not ease the burden on these well-intentioned instructors who often work at three or more different institutions to make little more than minimum wage (or poverty-level) with the same credentials as full-time faculty. Add to this, the growing bloat of administrative positions and support staff (at our institution, this ratio to that of full-time faculty is approaching 3:1) and the future of public higher education, particularly that of community colleges, looks bleak (#69).

In universities, the increasing reliance on teaching assistants over trained education professionals was similarly ascribed to the institutions’ desire to pay faculty as little as possible:

Composition courses have shifted out of the hands of professors and into the hands of graduate students, who will do the same work for a pittance (#43).

Along with receiving minimal compensation, instructors noted that the expectations placed on them are increasing, to the detriment of their students:

Since administrators expect us to produce magical outcomes with more than 120 writing students a semester, I don’t expect any changes in a system with decreasing funds and increasing expectations (#57).

When you have to teach 3-4 sections of composition, which means you have 60-

80 papers coming in at a time, timely and effective feedback always suffers (#64).

In general then, many of those who responded with additional comments echoed sentiments expressed in a number of the answers to Question 6. Poor student preparation, poor placement policies and poor administration were commonly mentioned. If anything, however, these responses seemed to show more disaffection and less hope for future positive change.

### ***3.5 Conclusion***

The overall impression from a review of the survey data is that there is a great deal of similarity in university and community college instructors' levels of teaching experience and professional training as well as in their perceptions of the most important composition skills. Students' abilities to write correct, standard English, to structure traditional essays, to evaluate arguments, and to gather and cite traditional academic proof are cited as among the most critical and the most problematic of these. They express the idea that students are inadequately prepared but attribute this lack of preparedness to a number of causes ranging from poor K-12 English instruction through student attitudes to institutional failures at the postsecondary level.

The shared majority opinion is that average students are only "somewhat prepared" for academic writing after completing postsecondary composition sequences and the majority of instructors suggest changes to improve those sequences, among these: smaller class sizes, more instruction time, more clarity in teaching objectives,

more consistency in grading, and more stringent placement requirements.

A number of the instructors express frustration with their students, their colleagues, their departments and their institutions. They mention feeling overwhelmed, overworked and, largely, undervalued; at the same time, however, there is not the level of disaffection one might expect; as noted, they make thoughtful suggestions for improving composition instruction, and; in general, seem to value both their students and their students' rights to a quality education.

At the same time, there appears to be a degree of disarray in the field. Professional training in composition instruction is relatively infrequent with the majority of respondents indicating that their own major educational focus is literary criticism and/or creative writing. It should be acknowledged that the stated focus on writing *skills* on the questionnaire begs the question of whether or not successful academic writing should be defined solely by the prescribed use of aggregated elements, independent of content. As one respondent wrote:

[f]raming writing as the acquisition and deployment of skills, however necessary those skills are, ultimately reduces writing to something that is analogous to pre-fab housing. It is serviceable and successful, but only in the most limited way, one which impoverishes the classroom. That being said, I also recognize that difficulty that comes with trying to teach writing as something more than a collection of skills (Appendix H, #152).

Most striking in this context are the variety of suggestions the instructors make for redirecting the focus of composition instruction at their institutions to improve student outcomes: for example, change to literature-based instruction, change to non-

literature based instruction, emphasize creativity and personal development, emphasize argumentation and professional writing, focus on the genres required in other disciplines, focus on the writing necessary for non-academic purposes, assign more writing, assign less writing. In short, while they largely agree on where they and their students should be going, they generally disagree on the best way to get there.

## CHAPTER 4: INTERVIEWS – METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

### ***4.1 Introduction***

In March 2011, I met individually with four AE instructors from two postsecondary institutions in Arizona; subsequent meetings took place during the winter break in 2013 after the preliminary analysis of the responses to the on-line questionnaire was completed. Two of the instructors were teaching colleagues; the other two were recruited as potential informants by one of the initial contacts. Each of the four has eight or more years experience teaching English at private and public postsecondary institutions in the United States and abroad.

The purpose for the initial interviews was twofold: first, before composing the questionnaire for use in the on-line survey, to obtain a preliminary idea of FYC instructors' qualifications for and commitment to AE instruction, their levels of involvement with curricula design and textbook choices, and their perceptions regarding their levels of success in helping students achieve AE proficiency; second, because reactions to the questionnaire results could potentially add valuable detail to the data, and in order to form relationships with the four that would not only set the stage for future interviews once the results were compiled but would also encourage them to approach colleagues about agreeing to interviews at that time. For this last reason, although all four were asked to choose convenient times and locations for the meetings, it was suggested that informal settings would be preferable.

In 2013, after the survey results had been received and reviewed, second meetings were arranged with the first four informants; at that time, three additional instructors had been recruited by one of the initial four. Informal settings were again the venue. Prior to the 2013 meetings, all seven FYC instructors were provided with copies of the questionnaire (Appendix A), the respondents' remarks (Appendices D-I), and a preliminary summary of the survey data. The purpose for this set of interviews was to gain additional clarification and in-person reactions to the survey findings.

One week after the last of the 2013 interviews were concluded, the seven informants were contacted by e-mail and asked to respond to one follow-up question related to but not explicitly addressed by the on-line survey; that is, "[i]n your opinion, what characteristics distinguish academic writing from standard written English?" This final question was asked in an attempt to address an omission in both the survey and interview procedures.

It should be noted that I have had social contact with six of the seven informants (both individually and in groups) between the times of the meetings and correspondence reported below, and the present. At times, our conversation has turned to FYC instruction; however, outside of general queries about the progress of this report, the research findings have not been discussed in depth.

#### ***4.2 Methodology***

Although three of the seven instructors interviewed stated that they were

unconcerned about being identified in this study, all have been assigned pseudonyms based on the alphabetic designations A (Ann), B (Barbara), C (Carol), D (Donna), E (Ernie), F (Frank) and G (Greg) and, for the same reason, some gender indicators have been changed in the discussion below. Other potential identifiers (e.g., the name of specific schools or colleagues) have been elided from quoted material and replaced with brackets.

All interviews were taped and all words appearing either in quotation marks or in offset paragraphs are taken directly from transcriptions of the recordings of those interviews. Each meeting was approximately one-half hour to two hours in length and, as might be expected, a great deal of information was recorded, much of it redundant and/or extraneous to this report; accordingly, the choice of material to excerpt was largely dictated by an attempt to ensure said material related to topics addressed by the on-line survey.

#### **4.2.1 Ann**

I first met with Ann at a coffee shop off-campus. When the purpose of the research had been explained, she expressed interest mixed with a certain amount of skepticism about the possibility of change in the field, adding that she doubted anyone cared what instructors had to say.

Ann is in her mid-forties and has held her full-time position in the same English department for over fifteen years. She initially qualified for the position, she states,

because she holds an advanced degree in English literature and had prior experience teaching in EFL programs in Europe. She began teaching EFL because “it was a way to earn some money” while traveling. The sole required qualifications for teaching English abroad were her B.A. and her status as a native English speaker.

When she returned to the United States, she entered and completed a graduate program in English literature. During that time, she stated, she never attended a class dealing with FYC instruction; further, while she did and does read professional articles relating to fiction writing and criticism (Ann is the author of two mystery novels and a book of poetry), she is “not particularly interested” in articles published in journals specifically concerned with FYC instruction. She currently teaches English Composition to native English speakers.

When asked to discuss the skills she thought most important for her students to master, Ann mentioned style and form. “But I concentrate on form because, frankly, I don’t think you can teach style.” When pressed, she clarified.

I give them the basics ... you know, don’t plagiarize, here’s what an MLA citation looks like, here’s how to come up with a thesis statement, here’s how an essay is structured ... but, in my experience, the only way you learn to write in a specific style is to read everything you can in that style. If they take what I’ve taught them then do a lot of reading for their classes and model what they read, they’ll be okay.

When asked if she felt students left her class prepared to write for other classes, she responded “Like I said, they’re in better shape than when I first got them but, really, it’s all up to them. I present the material. It’s up to them what they do with it.”

She said that, although she rarely reads FYC related journal articles, thanks to a conversation with a colleague, she had just finished reading a discussion of the proposed “core language” guidelines. She said that the proposals sounded “good” since one of the problems commonly encountered by composition instructors is poor student preparation; however, she expressed doubt about how effective the program would be since she believes it largely addresses outdated writing conventions.

When you see the way they [the students] write, it’s easy to think it’s hopeless but they’re not stupid and they’re not illiterate. They’re literate in a completely different way. They’re constantly texting. They take in information visually faster than we ever did. Their thoughts are all over the place. Thinking isn’t linear for them so when I’m talking about structuring a paragraph or avoiding sentence fragments, they look at me like I’m trying to teach them Latin. And maybe, in a way, I am. I tell them if they want good grades, here’s what they have to do but, frankly, I can’t tell them why. It’s the old parental “because we say so” and their automatic reaction is “oh yeah?”

Our second meeting took place in March 2013 at a restaurant off-campus. Ann was given a copy of the preliminary findings from the on-line survey and a verbal summary of the results. Again, she seemed interested but doubtful about the study’s potential. “What do you think all this will accomplish? Aside from you getting a doctorate, I mean.” When told that I hoped the study would, at a minimum, provide classroom instructors with a chance to express their opinions and to find out what others in their field thought and experienced, she, again, expressed doubt.

Ann then said that she personally is frustrated by the lack of communication between FYC instructors and administration, and, more generally, the minimal input she and her colleagues have in shaping the AE curriculum. She feels that the students only

take the composition sequence as currently structured because they are required to do so.

Most of them hate it because they don't see the point. If I could, I'd split composition away from English literature completely. The book for our entry level class is an anthology of short stories and poems. So we're giving students writing assignments that are basically literary criticisms and trying to teach them to appreciate the difference between a metaphor and a simile when most of these kids want to be CGI artists and IT majors. What's 'Ode to a Grecian Urn' got to do with them? I'm a writer, okay? So it's easy for me and I'm all for liberal arts education. Maybe there should be a required lit class but it doesn't belong with composition. I'm supposed to be able to teach all these unmotivated kids academic syntax and semantics, essay structure, how to do MLA citations, *and* poetry appreciation. It can't be done.

I asked how she would structure composition classes if they were, in fact, split from literature.

The most important thing is to convince students that what we're trying to teach them is relevant, that it's important to them personally. Then they're *invested* in learning. So, on the first day, I'd ask them what they plan to do at the university, what they think their major will be. Many of them have a pretty good idea of what it's going to be. Then I'd base their assignments on their subject. I'd choose a professional journal related to their majors and have them go on-line and read an article a week, outline it and write a summary. That would get them reading real academic writing. It would show them citation forms and how to identify important points and show them the structure of an academic argument and expose them to some specialized vocabulary. And there's a chance it might actually interest them.

I mentioned that I had read a number of articles related to academic genres in preparation for the study and asked if she thought it might help if instructors from other disciplines were involved in shaping the FYC curriculum. Ann laughed.

That's all we need. Do you know what qualifies me to teach comp? My English degree proves I've read a lot and I can write. That's it. But that's more than a lot of people can say. How much do you think the average IT prof writes? I mean,

come on.

Ann, an English literature major with over fifteen years of teaching experience, has a profile very similar to that of the majority of the survey respondents and, in our discussions, she commented on many of the same issues they had raised. She expressed a high level of frustration over what she has experienced as a lack of communication with administrators and only minimal input regarding her course content. As is true for many of the instructors in the survey, Ann is less than happy with her current text and, as is also true of them, she seems fairly skeptical about what impact the opinions of instructors might have on FYC instruction.

Most interesting, however, is that, despite an initial show of diffidence evident in statements about her students such as “they’ll be okay” and “it’s up to them what they do with it,” once Ann warmed to the subject, she volunteered a number of interesting ideas, suggesting that a modified genre approach in which writing instruction is based on professional readings from disciplines related to students’ proposed majors would be both more motivating and more relevant to her students than the current literature-based instruction. She also touched on the different literacies of her students, specifically mentioning their reliance on the visual, and their nontraditional thinking and communication practices.

#### **4.2.2 Barbara**

The first interview with Barbara, an instructor in her mid-fifties, took place in a

cafeteria on the campus where her classes are held. At that time, she had been working for five years as an adjunct faculty member; that is, although she teaches three classes each semester (the maximum instructional load for an adjunct instructor at her institution), her contract is renewed each semester at the department's discretion. Her qualifications for teaching AE include an advanced degree in education, and over twenty years combined experience teaching ESL at a community college in the Midwest and EFL in Taiwan; the only required qualification for teaching EFL abroad was the status of native English speaker although Barbara already held an advanced degree.

In graduate school she said that she "probably" read about teaching composition; however, she does not remember any specific or general content. Because the focus in her graduate studies was on education policy, she states, she does not recall taking any classes that specifically dealt with composition instruction or with any classroom practices.

Barbara currently teaches the second in a required two-class composition sequence. She said, however, that many of her students are unable to formulate a thesis, cannot construct a coherent paragraph and "are lost" when it comes to structuring a composition. She does not feel that the two texts currently required by the department are at all helpful. The first is a well-known writing handbook that, according to her, is over-priced and contains much more material than can be covered in one semester. The second, newly adopted, consists of various articles on rhetoric theory written by faculty and graduate students in her school's English department. She

said that these articles are not only “mindnumbingly boring,” but are also largely incomprehensible to her students because they are riddled with “grad school jargon.” This second text, she believes, was adopted only because it was written in-house, and is, therefore, “a moneymaker.” She added that she is unable to justify the purchase of the book unless she uses it in some fashion but that she finds this almost impossible to do. Neither book, in her opinion, addresses the real problems the majority of her students have in writing academic-grade compositions. Barbara said that she does not believe the course, as currently constructed, helps her students’ writing improve at all.

Most of the time, a C student stays a C student, an A student stays an A student and the failures keep failing. I could pretty much assign most of their final grades after I read their first papers.

The second meeting took place over dinner at an outside restaurant. While we waited for our food, she skimmed through a copy of the preliminary findings from the on-line survey then tapped a section.

This is so true. About class size. I teach three sections this semester. It’s a required course so each section has between twenty-five and thirty students which means that every time I give them a writing assignment, I wind up with about 100 papers to read and grade. Do the math. All I have time to look at, basically, is whether or not their papers are even comprehensible. Never mind things like logical arguments or good transitional phrases or vocabulary choices.

Concurring with a number of the survey respondents, Barbara said that she believed the ideal class size would be no larger than fifteen. This would give her more time to provide individual feedback and to address problem areas. She would also change the ratio of ESL to native English speakers in the class. This currently stands at

approximately 50-50, with the overwhelming majority of her ESL students coming from the Chinese mainland.

Recently, she wrote a supplementary booklet on teaching FYC to Chinese students. In the process, she read a number of professional articles, mostly dealing with differences between academic rhetoric and argumentation in Chinese and American postsecondary education. She stated that she found them “of limited applicability” since the majority of published articles are written by researchers and theorists and not by AE classroom instructors.

She said that, regardless of her booklet, there is still a “fiction in the department” that, by the time foreign students enroll in her classes, they are capable of producing the same level of written English as their first language English speaking classmates. She is aware that there is a proficiency placement test for ESL students but said that she does not know who composed or administers it, and has personally never seen it.

In theory, I like the idea of not segregating them [foreign students]. The problem is that the Chinese have completely different problems in their writing from the Americans. They come from a totally different academic tradition. What we call plagiarism is what they call good research. You find somebody authoritative and, since they already said something important and said it well, why would you try to say it in a different way?

Barbara said that, currently, “it’s like having two separate classes.” The Chinese students stick together and, possibly in response, the Americans do the same. If the proportion of Chinese students to Americans were lower, she feels there might be more

incentive for interaction or, failing that, if the overall class size were lower, she would have time to address the problems of both groups.

She went on to say that she would eliminate all mandates from “on high” that have to do with composition instruction.

You have these people in the English Department who haven’t taught a comp class in forever if at all. And they’re the ones making decisions about what we’re supposed to teach and how we’re supposed to teach it. Why is that? I’ll tell you what I think. Comp classes aren’t required because anyone in administration really gives a shit about what the students learn. Education’s just a business now. That’s why we’re stuck with the books we’re stuck with. The bookstore’s a moneymaker. And that’s why the classes are overcrowded. If [school name] can stick me with 150 tuition payers for the pittance I earn now, why cut it to fifty? And if they make it more difficult for foreign students to squeak through ... I mean, if we keep them until they actually can write ... they’ll lose foreign enrollment to schools that don’t. It all comes down to money.

Outside of reducing class size and balancing the class profile, I asked what she would suggest to improve student outcomes. Thanks to grade inflation, she told me, the “outcomes look just peachy but, if you mean helping them learn how to write, I’d say we adopt a good grammar text and drill them until they get it.”

Everybody quacks about student interest and creativity. But remember memorizing multiplication tables? That’s not interesting but it’s something everybody has to go through before they can go on. That’s school work. The operative word is “work.” Self-discipline. You hold your nose and you do what you have to do because it doesn’t matter how interesting or creative you’re trying to be if nobody can figure out what the hell you’re trying to say.

In our meetings, Barbara shared the concerns expressed by many of the survey respondents about FYC students’ lack of basic writing skills and about the use of required texts that are not at all helpful. After reading the survey results, she also

strongly agreed with the common perception that FYC classes are overcrowded and that, as a result, the quality of instruction suffers.

Like Ann and like many who responded to the survey, Barbara complains about the lack of communication in her department, most particularly a lack of communication with administrators. Her frustration and anger are obvious as she describes what she believes are the motivations of an education system that “doesn’t really give a shit about what students learn,” ascribing overcrowded classrooms, poor texts and the “pittance” she earns to the fact that “education’s just a business now.”

#### **4.2.3 Carol**

I first met with Carol in a coffee shop near her home. She, like Barbara, is an adjunct faculty member and has been teaching nine to twelve units of English at the same campus for over twelve years. When she was first hired, the preferred qualifications were an advanced degree (in any field) and previous teaching experience. Several years ago, her institution introduced the requirement of an advanced degree in the field the instructor teaches; however, Carol, whose graduate degree is in anthropology, was grandfathered in.

Her previous experience included teaching EFL for the United States Information Service in Turkey (where the only requirement was that she be a native English speaker). Subsequently, on the basis of that experience and her graduate degree, she was hired to teach ESL at a state university in Southern California. She taught there for seven years

before coming to Arizona.

When asked if she reads professional articles on teaching AE or has taken any classes related to the subject, she laughed and responded:

Why? The only way to really learn to write is just do it and then have someone who knows what good writing is guide you through the revision process. Lecturing on writing is mainly a waste of time. It's like lecturing on how to ride a bicycle. You tell them how to put on the brakes and how to shift speeds. You walk beside them and sort of help keep them up but pretty soon it's time to turn them loose and let them fall down a few times. Everything else is just b.s.

The text Carol currently uses to teach composition is an anthology of short essays. Books are chosen by the head of the department and, in the fall semester, the text was abruptly changed as one department head retired and another replaced him. At the time, Carol was upset that she was not given enough lead time to properly plan her class schedule; however, she is overall content with the change.

According to her, the new, larger text has so many selections that she is able to choose the ones she finds most interesting; "... which isn't saying much. Let's say all apples are boring. This is like choosing between a Red Delicious and a Granny Smith." When I asked if she would prefer to choose her own teaching material, she answered in the affirmative.

[The text] is overpriced for what they get. Plus they'll never use it again. There's a software workbook with comprehension and grammar drills, but that costs another fifty bucks so I tell them not to buy it. Most of them work. They're not rich. I already use things from the [daily newspaper] and the [school newspaper], news stories and things from the Op Ed page. It's nonfiction. It's interesting. Last semester, we had a great discussion about that law allowing guns on campus and I had them write Letters to the Editor arguing their opinions. We edited the letters in class then submitted them to the [daily newspaper]. One

got published! If it were up to me, I'd drop the book and just use newspapers and magazine stories. When I was in California, I had a comp class write their own newsletter. I was the editor. I assigned the stories. Sometimes they had to interview other students. Sometimes they did surveys or research. Then, every Friday, I'd get a batch printed up and we'd distribute them. They all had bylines. Most of them really liked it and I really saw their writing improve.

She paused.

I did a presentation at a regional TESOL meeting and a lot of people seemed really enthusiastic – other instructors, you know – but here we are, with every school still using the same boring texts in the same boring ways. Nothing really changes. You know, I'd probably read those journals you were asking about if there was any chance I could use anything they have to say. But there isn't.

My second meeting with Carol took place on campus between classes. After I gave her the preliminary survey results, she requested a few days to read through them before we talked further. I agreed and asked her to call when she was ready.

We met two weeks later at my home. Over coffee, Carol apologized for the delay and explained that she had just finished the midterm grading crush and had finally gotten around to reading the summary of the survey results. She told me she had been particularly struck by two things in the summary. First, she said she agreed strongly that critical thinking and sound argumentation are important components of academic writing (“the most important, I'd say”) and that these components are not given enough emphasis in composition texts.

... but a lot of comp teachers probably aren't very good at it either. How many of them have ever even constructed an argument of their own? Written, I mean, outside of citing other people and pulling out passages to prove what Moby Dick symbolizes or something like that. I mean, do they even know how to spot a fallacy or evaluate evidence? Bet not.

She added, however, that identifying and teaching the number of skills and processes that go into producing a passable academic paper is an overwhelming proposition; “[t]here’s too much to teach to too many in too short a time.”

Secondly, she said she was “pretty depressed” by the general tone of the survey respondents’ comments. She felt that, although many seemed passionate about their own classes, there was a general tone of futility when they discussed chances of instructors affecting proposed program changes. She was particularly upset about what she called the “blame game.”

What *really* got me was how many people said adjunct instructors are the problem. I’ve got as much education and experience as most of them do. I’m good at what I do. Better than a lot of full-time faculty. I substituted for this one guy who had me give his students an open book quiz from the MLA handbook. What’s the point of that? [School name] doesn’t hire full-time anymore because they’d have to pay a living wage and provide benefits. And if you’re adjunct, they can cancel your classes the day before they start if enrollment isn’t high enough. Surprise! No job! The problem isn’t me. We don’t have meetings or workshops or anything at [school name]. And even if we did, we wouldn’t get paid for them so who would go? Nobody’s ever observed one of my classes. Never. There are student evaluations but I seriously doubt that anyone ever looks at them. I’ve never heard of anyone getting promoted or fired or getting a raise based on performance. I don’t even know what good performance *is* according to them. No. That’s a lie. At [school name], it means you show up on time, you keep the students in the classroom for the designated amount of time, and you never, *ever* cause a problem for the department head.

In our first meeting, Carol raised the common issues of dissatisfaction with required texts and the perception that there is no effective communication between instructors and administrators. At our second meeting, after she had reviewed the survey responses, she expressed resentment over the fact that many survey

respondents either implied or directly stated that adjunct faculty were less qualified than full-time faculty to teach composition; a sentiment she believed is shared by administrators as evidenced by adjunct faculty's poor working conditions, lack of professional development opportunities and lack of rewards for teaching excellence. She reiterated that there is no communication between faculty (adjunct, at least) and administrators.

Two days after our last interview, however, Carol telephoned me at home and said that she had been "fired up" by our talk, and had met with the head of her department to present him with her idea of teaching beginning composition from newspaper and magazine articles. Much to her surprise, he was receptive and suggested that, while the text would still be required, she might include some of the new material in the fall. She was giddy with plans, leaving me more optimistic about this undertaking than I had been.

#### **4.2.4 Donna**

At the time I first interviewed Donna, she had taught composition and creative writing classes for an aggregate of eight years. She holds an advanced degree in Slavic Studies (with a focus on linguistics) and, like Carol, was grandfathered in when the college's requirements for instructors were changed. She is a published fiction writer who, before becoming an instructor in Arizona, first taught Russian language classes for the U.S. government and, later, ESL classes at a private college in Southern California.

Unlike the three instructors discussed above, Donna has never taught EFL and has never been abroad.

Our initial meeting was over lunch at a café a few blocks from the school. When I asked if she read professional journals on AE instruction, Donna responded that she is less interested in teaching methodology than in creativity theory. Teaching methodology, she believes, focuses on “endless” discussions of the pros and cons of rubrics as contrasted with holistic grading, of workshopping versus lectures. She admitted, however, that she had not actually read any of the articles; “[t]he truth is I just don’t have the time.”

The textbook she uses was chosen by the head of the department at the campus where she currently teaches. It is an anthology of poetry, short fiction and popular essays. When asked if academic articles were included, she answered in the negative and stated that “[w]e’re exposing them to some literature and we’re getting them to practice academic writing by commenting on what they’ve read. That’s already a lot to cover.”

In general, she said, her students show significant improvement over the semester. In lectures, she focuses on genre recognition, on helping her students recognize the ways in which various authors use the language to convey meaning and to speak to specific audiences. She also emphasizes citation forms and the MLA style book which they will be able to use for reference in later classes. I asked why she thought MLA was more useful than any of the other academic citation forms (e.g., APA, Chicago)

and she responded that MLA was the form required by the department; “[p]ersonally, I could care less.”

In her opinion, the most important component of good student writing is creative or original thought. “If they give me something to think about and say it in an interesting way, they get high marks. All the rest is just mechanics. That’s what god made writing labs for. I don’t have the time.”

Before our second interview, at Donna’s request, I e-mailed her a copy of the survey results. A few days later, we met in a local dog park, sitting at a picnic table while our dogs ran off-leash. Predictably, our conversation was interrupted a number of times; where one of these interruptions occurred during a quoted section of the transcribed tape, the break and related extraneous comments are indicated with an ellipsis enclosed in brackets.

The first thing she said was that she had decided to quit teaching. She had been doing part-time freelance writing for some time and had just landed a solid contract writing daily blog posts for a real-estate investment firm. She had also finished a collection of short stories that she planned to publish on Kindle. There was, she stated, no security or opportunity for advancement at her institution. “In California, I made good money but, after all these years, I’d make more as a cashier at Circle K than I get teaching at [school name].” I asked if she’d miss the students and she laughed.

God, no. The poor bastards. Look at what [school name] is doing to them. They keep raising tuition so they can pay incredible salaries to the administrators [...]. What do *any* of them do? And do you know how much they *earn*? [...] If you

factor in class time, prep time, grading time, time spent meeting with students, on-line time with students, the time I spend reading and dealing with school memos, I'm making about \$5.00 an hour. If that. [...] That's not just [school name]. Like, did you ever buy a big bag of potato chips then you get it home and open it and it's half full of air? Well, that's us. You and me and all those people in your survey. We're the two cents of potato chips packaged in a big, shiny bag labeled "Education" and sold to students for thousands [...] Anyway, it sucks. I can't do it anymore.

At that point, I turned off the recorder and Donna and I walked a few laps around the park with the dogs. She told me she was sorry, that I had not asked for "a rant" and she offered to meet again to discuss the survey results. I told her that I only had one more question which was: thinking only of the courses she'd taught, did she believe instructors could directly improve student writing and, if so, how. She asked for a few minutes so we took the dogs to my house and sat out on the back porch. I turned on the recorder again and, after a moment, Donna told me she thought the emphasis on skills was completely wrong.

Most of them [the students] will never go to graduate school so they don't *have* to know that stuff. Outside of academics, things like semi-colons are as *passé* as 'thee' and 'thou.' And computers check grammar and spelling. And, if they ever need it, there's even bibliography software now. So lecturing about *skills* is like making them learn how to make fire by rubbing two sticks together. Or how to use a slide-rule. Remember those?

I asked if that meant she would do away with composition classes altogether.

She shook her head.

But I'd call it something else maybe, like just 'Writing.' I never understood why *creative* writing is stuck off by itself. What other kind is there? Writing shouldn't be about narrowing people's thinking and the way they express themselves. Writing should help them expand their world and express what's unique about the way they see things. If I had a school, I'd want my students to use the

language to imagine possibilities and to work through problems for themselves. And screw the semi-colons.

Donna's emphasis on student creativity over the acquisition of skills was similar to the opinions expressed by a minority of the survey respondents. Unlike the others I had interviewed and unlike many on the survey, she was also content with her textbook and fairly sanguine about her students' progress. The one clear flash of anger in her comments came when she likened herself and other educators to a product sold at hugely inflated prices to gullible consumers.

#### **4.2.5 Ernie**

Ernie, a man in his mid-thirties, was an ESL instructor at a university in another southwestern state for two years before he and his partner relocated to Arizona in 2012. He holds an advanced degree in English literature and, in Spring 2013, was teaching two evening FYC classes mainly composed of students with, as he described it, "limited English proficiency." Two weeks after he had been given the survey summary, we met on the patio at his apartment complex.

He told me initially that he was pleased so many FYC instructors had responded in depth to the survey.

I liked reading what they had to say. It's an important subject but there's no one to talk to. Not at [name of school]. I met some other teachers at a meeting at the beginning of the semester but that's it. Outside of [Carol], I don't know anybody in the department.

I asked about the department chairperson and he shrugged.

I met the old one twice, once when I was hired and once at the meeting. Now there's a new one but I wouldn't know her if I saw her. What are you going to do? She's gone by the time my classes start. She e-mails. The last time I heard from her, it was about a textbook change next semester. [Carol] said that's typical at [school name]. When we get new presidents, they redecorate their offices and when we get new department heads, they switch the comp books. The thing is, I don't even know if they're going to have classes for me in the fall so I don't know if I'm supposed to try and get hold of a copy of the book or what.

When asked if he had felt as isolated in his previous teaching position, he replied that, because his classes had been held on a smaller campus and because the university had not been primarily a commuter school, there had been more opportunities to meet with his colleagues. One of these, the department chairperson, had been an important mentor for him.

I'd never taught an ESL class before but I figured, hey it's [name of state] so I'll get a bunch of Spanish speakers and so, you know, no problem. Then I walk into class that first day and there's all these Chinese kids. What do I know about Chinese? I panicked. But [mentor's name] told me that the only thing I had to worry about was getting them interested and keeping them that way. We got to choose our own material and she used "Jurassic Park" – not Crichton but a novelization of the movie written for like junior high school readers. So I used the same book and it was great! There were all these great vocabulary words like "slash" and "crimson" and "fangs," and passages about gene splicing and chaos theory. They loved it. Then, at the end of the term, we all watched the movie and, thanks to the book, they understood most of it. So that's the best thing I ever learned about teaching. Get them interested and keep them that way.

Ernie's partner brought down beer and we took a break. When we resumed, the sun was setting and the mosquitoes had appeared. "You know what I'm teaching this semester?" Ernie asked.

[A]n anthology with Hamlet and short stories by Updike and Joyce Carol Oates and Chekhov, for Christ's sake. Even I think they're boring and I'm a frigging lit

major. What does a former African child soldier – I have one in my class – what does *he* care about what some dead English guy had to say about a depressed Danish prince? To be or not to be was never a question for *him*. He knows there's no dream connected with dying. You choke on your vomit and crap your pants. He's *seen* it.

I asked him what he would do differently if he were put in charge of the program.

“Change the book!” he said. He added that he had noticed that no one answering the survey had spoken in depth of faculty morale and commitment. Faculty, he noted, have to be interested in what they are teaching before they can interest their students.

I'd have weekly meetings for all English teachers. Mandatory. Even if all we did was sit down and drink some beer together and kick around ideas. Like we could talk about our students, about what works and what doesn't. Maybe come up with some new ideas. Like maybe I'd have us try *manga* one semester. Every student could pick their own. So, first, we'd have them *write* the stories they see, put the pictures into words. Then maybe have them switch all the verbs into another tense and change the pronouns from male to female and see how that changes the story. Or write a different ending or a summary. We could try different stuff. That's what keeps teachers going. Good ones anyway. Once you get stuck, convinced you've got the one and only way to teach, you're dead.

I asked how he thought writing about manga frames would help his students with academic work.

They do most of their communicating in writing already, thanks to the internet so, if we can get them wanting to communicate ideas in a school context, if we can get them interested and show them they're capable of it, they'll transfer that excitement to other classes later.

The discussion with Ernie raised, once again, the common themes of lack of communication between faculty, and between faculty and administrators. In Ernie's case, this lack was felt more strongly because he had come from an environment where he had worked closely with the department chairperson who had become his mentor.

Like so many of the survey respondents and the other instructors I had spoken to, Ernie dislikes the required text, feeling that it demotivates his students because of its irrelevance to their experiences. And, as was also true for many who took part in this study, Ernie had a number of creative suggestions for ways to improve (or, at least, enliven) FYC instruction.

#### **4.2.6 Frank**

Frank, a retired school administrator, now teaches three FYC sections to native and ESL speakers. He holds an advanced degree in education with a minor in public policy. When I initially contacted him by phone, he expressed enthusiasm about being interviewed for the study. He told me, however, that he would need some time to read the preliminary survey report thoroughly before we met. Accordingly, I e-mailed him both the survey and the report, and waited three weeks before contacting him again. We met at a coffee shop near the campus where Frank's classes are held; he brought notes which he consulted as we spoke.

He began by telling me that he thought the choices presented to answer the question on student preparedness (Question 5, Appendix A) were faulty. He said that the instructors' answers probably were more reflective of the kind of students they had in their classes (ESL, basic writing or standard composition) than of their level of satisfaction with teaching practices at their institutions. We discussed my assumption that many of the challenges instructors face are basically the same with all three learner

types.

To some degree you're right but native speakers know about prepositions and articles. Some of the foreign students don't. And verb tenses. So they're struggling with that. And of course there are cultural things. As a teacher, you have to know something about your students' cultures ... China, Japan, your Arabs. I do a lot of reading. On the other hand, the American students think because they can speak the language, they can write it and that's a fallacy. One of the first things I have to do is disabuse them of that notion. Then we start from scratch and they don't like it. Many of these folks [referring to the report] say the same thing. The remedial aspect. What they're really saying is that somehow colleges should remedy what wasn't learned in high school. Next it will be remedial classes for what they didn't learn in elementary school. Maybe that's what high school is now. And placement tests. That's what a diploma used to represent. If you graduated high school, you knew how to write a complete sentence. You knew what a paragraph was. God knows, I'm not blaming the high school teachers. My wife taught high school for thirty years but I'll be honest. I don't know what happened to education in this country. [Laugh] I sound old, don't I? Well, I am.

Over the course of the next half hour, Frank told me that he regularly reads one professional education-related journal his wife still receives. The articles do not deal with postsecondary English instruction; however, he feels that the reading keeps him "in touch." He expressed interest in the similarities between community college and university instructors reflected in the survey then pointed out that the survey contained a misspelling ("fultime") in the answer options for Question 7 and laughed over my having mailed it, complete with that misspelling, to almost 1,000 English teachers<sup>15</sup>

When asked what changes he would make in FYC instruction, Frank had a number of suggestions.

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<sup>15</sup> I thanked him for letting me know and said that the resultant loss of face was so great I would be compelled to commit suicide; until I laughed, he looked somewhat uneasy.

I like the idea you had of requiring a separate logic class. Formulating a thesis, structuring an argument, evaluating sources – those are all tied to logic. And I don't know that your average English professor knows any more about logic than his students. Another thing I would want to see is an explicit, nationally accepted set of teaching objectives for these classes. If you teach algebra, you know exactly what the students should already know and what they're expected to learn. Placement and assessment are easy. You could say that determining what good writing is is subjective but I don't think that's true, not at the freshman level. They should be able to express their thoughts in clean, coherent, error-free prose. That's enough. That's a solid foundation they can build on later. And, last, I'd make sure that every school has a writing center that functions as a tutorial center, not a free, proofreading service. Students don't learn from automatic corrections. I don't think most of them even look at them. Like SpellCheck. I got a final paper that started out "When the spaniels conquered Central America ..."

In answer to the question of how well he believed, overall, his students were prepared by the composition sequence for subsequent class work, Frank replied that he agreed with many in the survey that his students were well prepared after taking the sequence.

I'm not saying they're perfect by any means but, if they apply what I taught them, they should be able to do it. A few of the people in the survey said that they'd like to see some form of study done about the efficacy of their classes. Now *that* would be important research.

Unlike a number of those I interviewed, Frank did not express the desire for better intradepartmental communication. This possibly relates to the fact that Frank is, himself, a former administrator. He also seems content with his position as an adjunct faculty member which may at least partially be because both he and his wife also have retirement incomes.

In our interview, however, a number of familiar points were made. Agreeing

with many of the survey respondents, Frank expressed the belief that K-12 education left students unprepared for postsecondary work, also agreeing with them that placement testing is necessary and that there should be additional help available for FYC students outside the classroom.

#### **4.2.7 Greg**

Greg teaches three FYC classes and, in addition, volunteers through his church to teach English to new immigrants. As was true for a number of the FYC instructors interviewed, Greg began teaching as an adjunct instructor without considering it would become a long term profession; however, currently, he has been teaching FYC and basic English for over five years.

Outside of three years spent at a university in the upper Midwest completing an undergraduate degree, he has lived and worked in Arizona all his life. His advanced degree is in theater with a minor in education; “I saw myself as the next Stanislavski but I would have wound up directing high school productions of ‘Les Miserables.’”

One week after he was sent the preliminary survey report, we arranged to meet at my house for brunch; when he began sneezing, we moved to a nearby restaurant. In addition to the dogs, my wife and I have cats; Greg, I learned, has allergies.

After we’d ordered, Greg told me that he thought the idea of the survey was a good one. He said that he has often felt that no one really values what composition teachers are trying to do, and that no one truly understands how important and how

difficult their jobs are. He was impressed by the thoughtfulness of the respondents' comments.

It makes me feel good to see that. In the department, the comp classes are sort of like the old, drunk uncle everyone in the family rolls their eyes at. Of course, we're what keeps the department viable. If they only offered lit classes, they'd be phased out fast for not bringing in the enrollment or collapsed with another underachieving discipline. It's all about the money at [school name] and, as long as comp's required, English is solvent.

When asked what he felt were the most important skills he taught his students, Greg said that he spends a significant amount of class time on trying to help his students learn to structure short essays.

Every Tuesday, I give them a topic in class. They freewrite sentences then I have them choose five or six as topic sentences for paragraphs. On Thursday, they have to turn in a short essay based on the sentences they picked. It's a lot like high school but you'd be surprised how many of them struggle with it and, if they can't manage a five or six paragraph essay, they don't have a chance with a term paper.

When asked how he was able to grade so many papers, he laughed.

I don't mind reading them but I would like more time. My comments are pretty sketchy. They have to be. The classes are too big, like they said in the survey but, as we know, it's all about enrollment.

He said that he regularly makes time to read journal articles and books related to ESL and basic writing instruction.

I search the topics I'm interested in and the library usually has something good. There's not anything I read cover to cover, a lot of it's ... I don't know ... but there are some things that are really good.

It turned out that Greg had read a number of articles arguing for the loosening of certain AE strictures to allow for academic acceptance of hybrid forms of language. He

was enthusiastic about the possibilities of decoupling the concepts of academic language use from intellectual ability, particularly for ESL students.

Some of the people in my church are incredibly educated. I have a botanist from the Ukraine who's been published in Europe – the woman speaks Russian, French and German – but she gets treated like a child by people here because her English is flawed. It's the same with a lot of university students. They have good ideas but, if they can't write them down in the accepted form, they aren't recognized. That's why teaching them to write their ideas in standard English is such an important job but who said passive construction is better than active? Personally, I don't think it is. Why is "therefore" better than "so?" I mean, for example. And why should we waste class time on citation formats? That's like teaching someone to use a phonebook. If you don't know the number, look it up. That's the end of that lesson.

If he were able to change composition classes, he stated, he would stop teaching those conventions.

And I'd have everyone stop teaching argumentation and start focusing on persuasion. The books say they're the same thing but they aren't. Persuasion requires you to read other people's ideas carefully, to try to understand why they believe what they do then you present evidence that may cause them to change their minds or maybe just think. Or maybe really understanding what they have to say and why they're saying it will do that to you. Maybe composition could change the world. Do you believe in abortion?

*Mazui*,<sup>16</sup> I thought. "Pro-choice."

"Are you Christian? Probably not, right?"

I shook my head and he smiled.

Then if I want to change your mind, it's useless for me to talk about sin or quote the Bible. I need to listen to *your* reasons for what you believe then maybe I can use ideas you do accept to change your mind. That's what we should be teaching students. Persuasion. That's what composition should teach, not empty forms and language to pound the other guys' ideas into dust.

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<sup>16</sup> the Japanese equivalent of "Oh boy."

In many ways, the interview with Greg was atypical. Although he brought up the “old drunk uncle” analogy to illustrate what he perceived to be the department’s attitude toward composition instruction and said that “everything’s about money” at his school, he did not perceive himself – as so many do – to be either particularly undervalued or overworked. He frequently takes the time to read professional articles related to ESL and basic writing instruction, and was able to cite the names of a number of authors (most notably, Patricia Bizzell) who recommend the incorporation of hybridized forms of academic writing. In keeping with this, he questioned more traditional academic language and the standard forms of argumentation, arguing that helping students achieve SWE proficiency was much more important than concentrating on academic forms.

#### ***4.3 Postscript***

Upon review, there was an important issue not clarified on the survey that the interviews had also failed to address; accordingly, each of the informants was recontacted by e-mail and asked “[i]n your opinion, what characteristics distinguish standard written English from academic prose?” All seven answered within a week and, as was true for the interview material, the e-mailed responses below have been excerpted for relevance.

Ann: There’s a particular objective voice in academic writing. I read some of the comments people made about wanting their students to develop their own voice in writing but that’s not right. An academic paper shouldn’t appear to involve the author. Of course it does but that’s minimized. It’s not like reading poetry

or fiction where the author's voice is an important part of the experience. It's more like a news report in that way and that supposed objectivity dictates the conventions.

Barbara: Academic prose is hypercorrect, dense and a little archaic. It features specialized vocabulary and verbs. SWE can be spoken but, if you spoke in academic English, people would think you were from another planet. It all comes down to style.

Carol: The styles are very different. Academic prose is made up of complex sentences and passives. The vocabulary is more sophisticated. No assertions or claims are made that aren't supported by evidence.

Donna: Academic vocabulary and phrasing are more concise but they're also more convoluted. You avoid simple sentences by loading in a lot more information using modifying phrases and clauses. I'm glad you asked because, now that I think about it, I'm trying to teach students to tango who never learned the box step. No wonder it drives us all crazy.

Ernie: There are obviously big differences in style and vocabulary but, in my opinion, the most important difference is in the communicative intent. When you write in a standard language, it's like speaking. You're judged by how clearly you communicate your ideas. If readers don't understand, it means something is wrong with the writing. In academic language, that shifts and the responsibility for understanding is the reader's.

Frank: Your question assumes that there are distinguishing characteristics and I don't think that there necessarily are. If my students can write clearly and correctly, I'm happy with that.

Greg: The hot air quotient. Seriously, I read an article a while ago (and, if I ever remember the author's name, I'll send it to you) about reading. The author referred to the fact that we read differently depending on the text's purpose. When we read instructions, we read really closely but, in academic reading, we almost skim. There's a predictable rhythm but individual words and phrases don't really matter. We make inferences; we "gather" what the author's talking about. What kind of writing is that? I wouldn't even know how to begin teaching it.

Most of these answers addressed two levels of difference between academic

and standard written language. On the surface, there are academic language's convoluted vocabulary, and overloaded, somewhat archaic syntax and the associated, preferred use of the objective voice. On the deeper level, however, Ernie spoke about the fact that, in SWE, the responsibility for ensuring that the message is understood is assigned to the writer; while in academic writing, the burden for understanding is squarely placed on the reader. Barbara referred to this same quality, likening SWE to spoken English (where the responsibility for ensuring understanding is the speaker's) and contrasting this with traditional academic language which would, if spoken, sound alien. Greg also addressed understanding from the standpoint of the reader suggesting that, in academic writing, the medium is often the majority of the message.

I found their observations of this second level of difference extremely interesting. One of the fundamental differences between standard English and standard Japanese is that, as Barbara, Greg and Ernie noted, the responsibility for successful communication in standard English rests with the speaker; in Japanese, the reverse is true. In most cases in English communication, if listeners do not understand what has been said, the fault is the speaker's and is usually ascribed to the speaker's lack of clarity, specificity or facility with the language; however, in Japanese, too much specificity on the part of the speaker would be redundant and, at times, vaguely insulting.

Those who have investigated this essential difference between expression in the two languages state that it is directly related to essential differences in the two cultures (e.g., Elliott, Scott, Jensen & McDonough, 1982; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Hall, 1984;

Jandt, 2012; Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2008). Although it might be argued that, given the diversity of the U.S. population, the categories are overbroad, the United States is classified as relatively egalitarian and heterogeneous; i.e., in general, speakers are not assumed to have more authority than their listeners and, at the same time, only minimal assumptions can be made about shared meaning. Japan is hierarchical and homogenous; i.e., speakers (those who initiate communication if not those who respond) do have the most authority and it is tacitly assumed, because of the relative lack of diversity in the culture, that meaning is shared. Academic culture, also distinctly hierarchical and homogenous, is expressed through a language with similar conventions.

#### ***4.4 Conclusion***

A number of commonalities are apparent from these interviews. First, the participants are extremely expressive, and obviously have made a considerable investment in their profession of thought and emotion. Each holds an advanced degree and, without any specialized training in composition instruction, has spent a significant number of years teaching FYC at the postsecondary level. Most perceive themselves to be overworked and without significant control over either curricula or texts.

As was also evident in the comments made by survey respondents, there is a certain level of anger which appears to relate to disaffection with and perceived distance from their institutions' policies and administrators. Several stated they have minimal contact with and feedback from their administrators, describing themselves as

undervalued, unappreciated and underpaid. Four of the seven (Barbara, Carol, Donna, Greg) express the perception that the administrations at their institutions define education as a business and that there is less institutional concern about improving the quality of instruction than about keeping down costs and maximizing enrollment, and less about ensuring the quality of texts than about guaranteeing bookstore profits. All focus on teaching writing basics believing that, in general, students are poorly prepared for academic writing when they enter FYC classes. All except Barbara share the opinion that FYC instruction makes a positive difference; however, their estimations of the degree of that difference vary.

While they had a number of creative ideas they believed would bring about positive changes in student outcomes, as was true among the instructors responding to the on-line questionnaire, there was wide disparity in the interviewed instructors' opinions as to how those changes could be effected. Ann suggested changing the focus of the classes to genre-based instruction using professional articles in the students' majors, Donna and Ernie to more creative writing through imagining "possibilities" or translating manga into prose, Carol to journalistic writing based on magazines and newspapers, and Barbara, Frank and Greg to the production of "clean prose" incorporating grammar drills, standardized learning objectives and tutorial centers, or the acceptance of hybridized forms of AE.

In short, given their advanced degrees, all seven have demonstrated that they can recognize and produce sound academic prose. Given their years of teaching

experience and their clear emotional investment in the profession, they have also demonstrated that they care about student learning outcomes. At the same time, as was evident from the comments made by the survey respondents, there is no general agreement among them on how best to teach FYC.

Finally, an intriguing confirmation of the suggestion that academic language directly reflects academic culture resulted from my post-interview e-mail asking the seven instructors what specific traits they believed distinguished AE from SWE. In addition to the surface conventions mentioned in Chapter 1 of this study and presented in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3, Barbara, Ernie and Greg spoke of a significant contrast in the communicative intent of academic and standard written language which entails different roles in the responsibility for successful communication for listener (reader) and speaker (writer). I see this as directly related to the work of those scholars cited in Chapter 1 who have pointed to the interrelationship of academic culture and academic language and, as will be discussed in the following chapter, as directly relevant to the possibility of improving FYC instruction.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### ***5.1 Style and substance***

As discussed in the introduction to this study, AE's function can, in part, be implicitly inferred from its historical beginning and evolution as a set of prescribed rhetorical devices successfully employed by groups of academics in competition with others to establish themselves as the recognized experts in their respective fields. From the experimentalists of the 1600s through the behaviorists of the 1920s to the researchers of today, AE has proven its durability as the language of science and – because the two have become virtually synonymous – of higher education.

Scholars noting the increased diversity of modern student populations and the differential access to writing skills these populations have available to them before entering the academy have attempted to understand AE's ongoing critical role in academic success – both the *who* and *why* of Zappa's question. The consensus is that AE use is enforced by members of the academy because it is a cultural language, a language that both reinforces and validates academics' values, and marks them off as a distinctive and elevated group (Ball, 1998; Bartolome, 1998; Delpit, 2001; Fordham, 1997; Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2005; Gosden, 1993; McCray, 2005; Street, 1984). Others, while suggesting that there is no monolithic academic language, that AE is a label applied to a number of discipline-specific language variations, agree that these variations also serve a sociocultural function; that is, biology students must learn to

“speak” the language of biologists, economics students must learn to “speak” the language of economics (e.g., Bazerman, 2005; Blakeslee, 1997; MacDonald, 1994; Miller, 1994; Russell, 1997).

The traits of AE and/or its discipline-specific variants have been repeatedly enumerated in the literature; that is, the presentation form mimics a linear time-line; the prose is neutral, formal and author-vacated, intertextuality is required, and the whole makes liberal use of hedges, layered appositive phrases, complex sentence structures, and specialized vocabulary (e.g., Bazerman, 1984, 1988; Elbow, 1991; Gee, 2005; Shapin, 1984; Swales, 1990). These traits, however, are stylistic features and, if AE is simply seen as a stylistic variant of standard written English, those who deny the existence of an academic language *per se* (e.g., Blakeslee, 1997; MacDonald, 1994; Miller, 1994; Russell, 1991) are correct; that is, differences in style, by themselves, do not constitute a separate language in any sense other than Snoop Dogg’s lyrics might be said to be written in a language different from Paul McCartney’s.

FYC instructors stress that correct standard written English is the necessary base for AE and, if AE is understood as a stylistic variant of standard English, it is understandable that students relatively proficient in that base would have an easier time incorporating AE’s features into their writing than those not as proficient. At the same time, it is difficult to understand why students could not be taught to accommodate the academy’s limited stylistic preferences without either being enculturated by their instructors, as Bartolome (1998) argued was necessary, into white

middle-class reality or, as Driscoll (2011) suggested, being required to “engage in metacognitive reflection” (p. 28). In addition to introducing students to writing in the academic style, the survey responses indicate that FYC sequences also include instruction in: standard grammar, some basic academic vocabulary, the principles of paragraph and essay writing, and; navigation through one of the many (most commonly MLA) citation formatting manuals. To paraphrase one of the instructor’s in this survey, teaching postsecondary students the above skills within one to two semesters would not appear to be “... the stuff of rocket science” (Appendix I, 33); however, if not exactly rocket science, FYC instruction appears to run a close second.

Countless articles and books reiterate the observation that FYC sequences leave many students insufficiently prepared for academic writing (e.g., Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Hyland, 1998; Lindeman, 1993; Swales & Feak, 2004; Valdes, 2004). As possible solutions to this problem, the recommendations in the literature range from Bartolome’s (1998) above cited cultural fix through vaguely outlined suggestions from transfer and genre proponents (e.g., Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Driscoll, 2011; Moore, 2012; Rounsaville, 2012), through the adoption of new FYC frameworks and guidelines (e.g., Beaufort, 2007, 2012; O’Neill, Adler-Kassner, Fleischer & Hall, 2012), with a number of authors concluding that the problem is insoluble.

Although most FYC instructors would not go that far, the majority of participants in this study express the opinion that, after completing the FYC sequence, the average composition student is only “somewhat prepared” to write an academic paper,

suggesting that it will take fundamental program changes in order to improve AE instruction at their institutions. There is, however, little agreement on what those changes should be. It might be suggested that the differences in the instructors' formal educational backgrounds contribute to this lack of agreement and, as noted in the interview chapter, some postsecondary institutions in Arizona have recently tightened education requirements for faculty. Under the new regulations, FYC instructors are required to have a graduate degree in English; however, that degree includes creative writing, English literature, composition and a number of other specialty majors. Pedagogy is not a requirement. It is difficult to see, therefore, how this new restriction will reconcile faculty members' differences of opinion about best practices and pragmatic classroom changes.

Instructors did largely agree on the need for certain changes: smaller classes, longer class sequences, remedial classes, tutoring, and much more stringent placement tests before students are admitted into class. None, however, expressed optimism that these changes were likely to be implemented.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Lynch (2012) urged composition instructors "to trade disenchantment for demoralization" (p. 474) and, in their interviews and in responses to the survey, it appears that many have done just that. In the interviews reported in this study, Donna refers to her students as "poor bastards" (p. 109) to whom education has been packaged and sold like an overpriced bag of potato chips; Carol believes administration has no interest in instructors' teaching qualifications or class

performance, basing access to low-paid, undependable teaching positions only on whether or not an instructor will “show up on time ... keep the students in the classroom ... and never, ever cause a problem” (p. 106) and Barbara echoes both women, saying no one in administration “gives a shit what the students learn” because education is “just a business now” (p. 115). The following representative comments from the survey results also suggest the outlook from the instructors’ point of view is poor:

[s]ince administrators expect us to produce magical outcomes with more than 120 writing students a semester, I don’t expect any changes in a system with decreasing funds and increasing expectations (Appendix I, 57);

George Orwell once said that when “... our language becomes slovenly, we become a nation of fools.” All of the recent data concerning reading and writing skills suggests that we have, indeed, become very slovenly (Appendix I, 61);

[i]t might take a few more years, but “Academically Adrift” might become more applicable to community colleges when one looks at the numbers of students who actually complete what they started there (Appendix I, 69);

[i]t seems nearly impossible to do a good job, given the skills (or lack thereof) the students are bringing to college and the lengthy list of expectations the college places on the single semester of introductory writing (Appendix I, 72);

I worry that ignorance is becoming so widespread, even among post-secondary educators that, in my lifetime, America will lose its standing as possessing the world’s greatest higher education system (Appendix I, 33).

For the past sixteen years, I have been teaching accredited Japanese language courses at a community college in southern Arizona. In a clear parallel to the backgrounds of the seven FYC instructors interviewed for this study, when I began I had no teaching experience and, aside from my status as a native Japanese speaker, my only

qualifications were an undergraduate degree in law from a Japanese university and graduate degrees in intercultural communication and linguistics from universities here in the U.S.

My classes are composed of students from highly diverse linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, who come with varying levels of previous educational experience and very different motivations for studying a relatively difficult new language; however, after completing the first two semesters of the four semester sequence, these students are expected to be able to read and write hiragana and katakana (two distinct alphabets of approximately 130 syllabic variants each), and almost 180 kanji characters. Additionally, I expect them to be able to write and speak in two socially dependent styles: plain (used between family and friends) and simple polite (used in most other social situations); each of which has its own separate vocabulary words and grammar rules.<sup>17</sup> By the end of the first year, the majority have a good foundational knowledge of the language, are able to engage appropriately in spoken and written conversations in Japanese, and are well prepared to continue their language studies.

Similarly, if FYC were concerned only with teaching literate L1 or L2 English speakers to write essays in correct standard English, and then to incorporate into their writing a limited set of minor stylistic variations, there is no reason it should be

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<sup>17</sup> For readers interested in transfer: Japanese language students who wish to continue in the second-year sequence are expected to remember what they have learned in the first year over summer vacation, and be ready to apply and build on it again in the fall. After a two week (10 class-hour) review, they do and they are.

impossible or even particularly difficult for students, certainly no more diverse than mine are, to learn, and for instructors, most certainly no less qualified than I am, to teach.

FYC, however, attempts to do much more.

A number of authors suggest that, in addition to the mastery of certain syntactic and semantic conventions, AE competency requires facility with linear argumentation, specificity, the ability to state and defend assertions made about intangibles, and the judicious use of intertextual support (Bazerman, 1988; Swales, 1990). FYC instructors clearly agree. The top listed AE skills on the survey (also listed among the most difficult for students to master) are *formulating a thesis*, *logic* and *research/reference* skills; the tacit premise being that students cannot write acceptable academic prose unless they can also: assert an arguable, defensible and original claim, use the rules of Aristotelian logic to develop the argument supporting the claim, and demonstrate their familiarity with and respect for accepted scholars who have, at some point in their careers, written something related in some way to that claim. As Bartholomae (2008) phrased it, FYC instructors are charged with nothing less than teaching students "... to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding and arguing that define the discourse of our community" (p. 3); and, as genre proponents would hasten to point out, the "we" and "our" in Bartholomae's statement include, among many others: art historians, biologists, engineers, geologists, linguists and, yes, even rocket scientists.

In addition, therefore, to ensuring their students have an adequate command of SWE and the stylistic conventions of AE, FYC instructors also assume the responsibility for students' learning, and being able to demonstrate in their writing, the accepted principles of argumentation and adequate evidence as argumentation and evidence are understood in a number of academic disciplines. These would appear to be more than sufficiently ambitious course objectives; however, the assumptions related to AE's sociocultural function raise the FYC teaching challenge still higher.

### ***5.2 Style as substance***

A number of years ago, my wife and I visited a noted Midwestern modern art museum. The second floor gallery was dominated by an oversized, half-deflated canvas toilet entitled, its placard informed us, "Soft Toilet." Nearby was a table covered with boxes bristling with nails. I do not recall what their placards had to say about them. There was also a display of "found art" (small piles of assorted sticks, broken toys, rocks, empty cans and animal bones) and a series of photos documenting an artist putting the finishing touches on what, according to the associated placard, the artist himself asserted was no longer art once it was completed.

As we turned to leave, we paused in front of a two-wheeled, wire push basket leaning against the corner by the door. It was partially filled with cleaning supplies. Another couple came up beside us and all four of us stood silently gazing at it until, as one, we looked for the placard that would tell us the piece's title and its significance.

There wasn't one.

Was it an installation in progress? Was it some clever artistic commentary about the perception of art? Or was it, as it certainly appeared to be, a cleaning supply cart left behind by the janitor? What to do? After a frozen moment, I shook my head and chuckled – which, I thought, would cover me nicely no matter what – then we all drifted slowly away; the other couple to contemplate the canvas toilet, my wife and I, laughing, outside to the parking lot.

The point of the story is that AE style may be seen as directly analogous to the art placard; that is, it functions as the academic placard. Traditionally, it has been used to express and, therefore, mark critical, thoughtful arguments, contributions to the common knowledge; unfortunately, it has also been used to mask the fact that what we have in front of us in many cases is the equivalent of a random pile of sticks and broken toys.

The following are excerpts from the printed abstracts of two papers accepted for presentation at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference of the Association for Reformational Philosophy held in Amsterdam in 2011; the author of one subsequently, gleefully, announced it was a hoax; the author of the other was dead serious. Although neither makes sense, in my own opinion, the outright joke actually gives the impression of being the more intelligible.

The question then posed is, if reformational philosophy is an ontology of actuality in the sense that it is a theory that speaks of actuality, has [sic?] it, or could it, also be a theory that is aware and takes as its task a certain belonging to

actuality. Reformational philosophy has dared to make a close connection between reality and temporality; it has also made trenchant criticisms of the dangers of historicism (Hayward, 2011).<sup>18</sup>

The question is not what structures order, but what structure is imposed on our transcendent conception of order. By narrowly focusing on the disorderly state of present-being or the “incoherence of a primordial multiplicity,” as John Haught put it, Darwinian materialists lose a sense of the ultimate order unfolding in the not-yet-being (Maundy, 2011).<sup>19</sup>

Similarly and more famously, consider the following excerpt from the 35-page article published in *Social Text* (a refereed journal) in 1996, authored by physics professor Alan Sokal. Professor Sokal subsequently announced that the entire piece was a hoax intended to illustrate the inherent silliness of, among other things, postmodernism as a legitimate field of study. It is quoted here for a different purpose; that is, to illustrate that style has become *the* defining characteristic of academic writing;

[u]nfortunately, Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle has frequently been misinterpreted by amateur philosophers. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1994, 129-130) lucidly point out, in quantum physics, Heisenberg’s demon does not express the impossibility of measuring both the speed and the position of a particle on the grounds of a subjective interference of the measure with the measured, but it measures exactly an objective state of affairs that leaves the respective position of two of its particles outside of the field of its actualization, the number of independent variables being reduced and the values of the coordinates having the same probability ... Perspectivism, or scientific relativism, is never relative to a subject; it constitutes not a relativity of truth but, on the contrary, a truth of the relative, that is to say, of variables whose cases it orders according to the values it extracts from them in its system of coordinates (p. 26).

Composed largely of such polysyllabic gibberish and laced liberally with similar

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<sup>18</sup> He meant it.

<sup>19</sup> He didn’t.

faux quotations, Sokal's article also provides an extensive bibliography including what should have been such obvious tip-offs as: *African science: Myth or reality?*, Einstein and African religion and philosophy: The hermetic parallel (publication attributed to *Einstein and the Humanities*) and *Quantum equilibrium and the origin of absolute uncertainty*. Still, because the stylistic placard is firmly attached, not a single peer reviewer recognized that it was a parody and, when Sokal did come forward, he was greeted with outrage.

More seriously for the state of academics, consider the FYC literature reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study. Illustrating the observation of one survey respondent that "... research and publication in this field tends to be tedious and redundant" (Appendix I, #5) and the more generalized assertion made by Bauerlein, et al (2010) that "the amount of redundant, inconsequential, and outright poor research has swelled in recent decades" (p. 1), a sample of recently published research reports was found to include a number of studies that: conclude nothing (e.g., Donohue & Erling, 2012; Rosenfeld, Leung & Oltman, 2001; Truscott, 2007), conclude nothing of any apparent significance (e.g., Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Driscoll, 2011; Hess, 2012; Huang, 2010; Loudermilk, 2007; Moore, 2012; Nelms & Dively, 2007; Noble & Sawyer, 2013; Rounsaville, 2012, Tardy, 2006) and/or conclude nothing of which we were not already aware (e.g., Adel & Erman, 2012; Jesnek, 2011; Riazantseva, 2012; Graves, Hyland & Samuels, 2010; James, 2010; Lee, 2009; Volpe, 2011; Yang & Sun, 2012; Yeats, Reddy & Wheeler, 2010; Sullivan, 2011). There were also the musings of the compositionists (e.g., Owens, 2001; Ratcliffe,

2005; Worsham, 2006) who issued a manifesto (Latour, 2010) although, two years later, the compositionists themselves were still apparently unsure what it is exactly that “composition studies studies” (Sanchez, 2012, p. 245).

I would submit that the above referenced reports and articles make little or no obvious contribution to what Edwin Boring in the 1930s envisioned as the collaborative, scholarly “progress of thought” (quoted in Bazerman 1988, p. 273). What they all *do* have are stylish placards. Those attached to the majority are embellished with statistics, jargon and acronyms; those attached to the compositionists’ musings are garlanded with abstruse references and gratuitous Latin phrases but each is recognized and accepted by the academic community as a marker indicating that “this is scholarly work.”

This acceptance can be explained by the fact that the use of a sociocultural language defines membership in a community (i.e., provides the appropriate placard) precisely *because* said use entails the premise that what is being expressed in that language is representative of the community’s values and consonant with its members’ adherence to and personification of those values (Bartholomae, 2008; Fairclough, 1995; Foucault, 1984; Gee, 2005; Giroux, 1981); that is, by their use of AE, members of the academic community signal that they are rationally, thoughtfully and, with a thorough grounding in and respect for the work of those who came before, engaged in the business of contributing or, at the very least, attempting to contribute to the incremental, progressive accumulation of human knowledge. It is in this confusion of

the signal with the meaning attributed to it that the elusive *je ne sais quois* is added to AE and therein lies the difficulty in successful FYC instruction.

Feldman (2000) formulated the following practical syllogism for classroom practitioners to consider:

Major premise: I would like my students to attain a certain educational goal.  
 Minor premise: The context of my teaching situation is as follows ... which restricts the actions that I can take in the following manner...  
 Conclusion: Therefore, I choose to take the following action...  
 (p. 610)

A clarification of Feldman's major premise in relation to FYC instruction is revealing. As discussed above, FYC instructors are charged with ensuring students' SWE competency, introducing the style conventions of AE, and teaching the principles of sound argumentation (including recognizing and avoiding fallacies) and critical thinking (including finding and evaluating the appropriateness of sources). Additionally, as members of the academic culture, instructors accept that what their students learn to "say" in AE should be appropriate to that culture; that is, not only student writing but, to some degree, the students themselves should conform to a number of academic ideals.

As reflected in the survey responses shared in Chapter 3, instructors believe their students' writing should demonstrate: clear understanding and knowledge of a subject (D-72, D-442, D-539)<sup>20</sup>, creativity, insight, originality (D-11, D-156, D-400, D-448, D-504, E-177, E-244, E-268, E-345, E-491, E-596), attention to detail (D-28), and a general

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<sup>20</sup> The letters in parentheses refer to the relevant appendices; the numbers to the lines inside the appendices.

interest in ideas and a passion about the topics they are writing about (D-298, E-58, E-252, E-445). These topics (theses) should be: thoughtful (E -1), complex (E-7, E-407, G-190), arguable (E-39, E-98, G-49), appropriate and relevant (D-508, E-47, E-64), strong (D-18, D-361, E-135, E-241, E-264, F-148, G-55, G-128, G-243), original (E-78, E-156, G-49), interesting (D-508, E-348), concise (D-18, G-29), and well-developed (D-73, E-78, D-101).

In order to accomplish the above, individual instructors suggest that FYC students should develop: mental flexibility (D-363), genuine curiosity (D424), the belief that they have “something worth saying” (D-192), an understanding of the ways in which values affect the decision-making process (E-340), an “intrinsic concern” regarding the quality of their work (E-337), the desire to communicate with others (D-533), the ability to benefit from constructive criticism (D-349), a strong work ethic (D-553), and persistence (D-317, E-444, E-456).

One of the survey respondents expressed the belief that FYC instruction would be more successful if the instructors were better qualified to teach it.

... I don't think that composition classes are going to improve until we can convince English departments that pedagogical content knowledge is important ... At our institution all English faculty are required to teach composition, and many of us are not really qualified to do so. A master's in Romantic poetry or a PhD in Shakespeare don't really cut it! (Appendix I, 55)

I would agree; at the same time, however, it is difficult to imagine who *would* be qualified to teach FYC as it is currently constituted. To summarize yet again, FYC instructors have not only been charged with ensuring all incoming students' SWE

competency and introducing them to AE style, they have also been given the explicit responsibility for teaching students the principles of sound argumentation (including recognizing and avoiding fallacies) and critical thinking (including evaluating the appropriateness of sources), subjects in which many have received no specific training.

Additionally, FYC instructors have been implicitly assigned and have assumed the responsibility for instilling in their students (and ensuring that their writing reflects) a number of traditionally valued academic traits, ranging through passion about their writing topics up to and including “intrinsic concern” over the quality of their work. All of this should take place over the course of no more than two semesters in classes of up to 35 students taught, in most cases as noted above, by English majors and, in many cases, by underpaid, contract workers (adjunct faculty), and by inexperienced graduate students.

In comparison, rocket science looks easy.

### ***5.3 The Spaniels in Central America***

In the course of a published debate over the use of literature in FYC courses, Erika Lindeman (1993) stated that:

Freshman English does what no high school writing course can do: provide opportunities to master the genres, styles, audiences, and purposes of the academy and the professions. That is what our colleagues across the curriculum want it to do; that is what it should do if we are going to drag every first-year student through the requirement” (p. 312).

Twenty years after Lindeman’s statement was made, this study has

demonstrated that both FYC literature and FYC instructors assess “freshman English” as falling far short of the above stated goals; however, students are still being dragged through the requirement and, as the results of this study indicate, the view from the classroom is, in the main, bleak. Instructors from a wide range of educational backgrounds with varying degrees of experience perceive themselves as largely without guidance, working at a distance both from their colleagues and from administrators who make the decisions that affect them. Many are frustrated and angry, believing that they are seen by their institutions as inexpensive and interchangeable commodities to be sold at a profit to students who are underprepared and, in increasingly diverse and increasingly large classrooms, who cannot be given the individual attention they need.

During our interview, Ann expressed a strong degree of skepticism about what practical effects on FYC instruction this study might have. As noted above, this skepticism and an attendant sense of powerlessness were also apparent in many of the comments made by the survey participants. On the institutional level, unfortunately, I share their frustration.

The sheer amount that has been written about academic language by academics – sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, philosophers, linguists, and educators – is staggering. It is especially puzzling, then, that FYC, the course sequence traditionally entrusted with passing this language on, is treated as a stepchild at most postsecondary institutions. Generally, full or overfilled classes are taught by graduate students, adjunct instructors contracted from term to term, and the junior-most members of English

department faculties and, rather than spreading the incredible grading load which results from requiring at least three papers per student per term, these instructors are assigned up to fifteen units of FYC. Often without instructor input, texts change from term to term: now focusing on fiction, now on nonfiction, now on both, and now on neither. Student placement tests are designed without instructor input, course grading is not standardized, writing centers and computer lab space are not universally available, and professional development funds are directed elsewhere.

At least a partial explanation for this may be fact that, on the institutional level, as many participants in this study observed, postsecondary education is now largely treated as a business. Mandating smaller student to instructor ratios costs money. Hiring full-time instructors with benefits costs money. Losing enrollment and lowering retention rates because of a crack-down on grade inflation or because of required remedial classes cost money. Staffing tutoring centers and writing labs costs money. In the near future, at least, none of these changes are likely to be implemented and, if they ever are, Ann and the others are right; it will not come as the result of a single study reporting instructors' opinions.

I do, however, believe that some changes are possible on the departmental level. Although a single instance is not a valid basis for generalization (even in the social sciences), Carol's department chair was receptive to her ideas and was able to accommodate her suggestions about teaching materials. On a more general level, department chairs are not far removed (if at all) from the classroom. There is hope that

the majority still see students as students rather than as customers. The results of this study then suggest a way to work toward more local solutions.

From the literature, the survey and interview material presented in Chapters 3 and 4, and from the discussion above, it should now be evident that, while the objectives for FYC instruction are similar across the board, the definitions and expectations associated with it are currently so tangled and confused – AE language conventions with thinking patterns with sociocultural values – that it is not surprising instruction falls short. A first practical step toward remedying this is to unpack the problem.

Similarly, as noted in Chapters 1 and 2 of this study, the literature is rife with suggestions for increasing student engagement and improving outcomes, these include but are not limited to: FYC instructors' enculturating freshmen into white, middle-class culture, learning then teaching all relevant discipline-specific genres, and learning then teaching transfer skills, all the while, "encouraging students to engage in metacognitive reflection" (Driscoll, 2011, p. 28).<sup>21</sup> These suggestions may very well have value; however, the FYC instructors in this study are nearly unanimous in stating that they already have too much to teach to too many students in too short a time. Assigning them still more vaguely defined and overly ambitious responsibilities would seem to be a step in the wrong direction; instead, it might be more productive to see what, if any, responsibilities can be reassigned. Four suggestions come immediately to mind.

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<sup>21</sup> How would that go? "Alright, class! Let's all think about thinking about thinking! I *know* you can do it!"

First, in a preliminary report on the survey data sent to AE instructors, I synthesized their comments and suggested, among other things, that the responsibility for teaching research skills and, more importantly, instructing students in the principles of Aristotelian logic and argumentation be transferred out of FYC to philosophy departments (most of which already offer courses in critical thinking) in the form of a parallel, required first-year class or sequence of classes. This would seem to offer a pragmatic, if partial, solution to FYC instructors' common perception of having too much to teach in too little time. Additionally, since it is agreed that logic/critical thinking, argumentation and the critical evaluation of sources are important values in academic writing, it would, in fact, be more appropriate to have students instructed in these skills by those with the appropriate pedagogical content knowledge.

In addition to being a practical and positive change for FYC instructors, the change would be practical and positive at the institutional level: universities and colleges adopting a new required course sequence would bring in more tuition money; English and writing departments would not lose control of the FYC sequence, and; struggling philosophy departments would gain a required class sequence. Finally, although students would have to spend more time and money taking classes they might not see the point of initially, I would argue that it would be far more effective for the academics most familiar with the study of written style and form to instruct students in style and form; while the academics most familiar with the study of logic and critical thinking instruct students in logic and critical thinking.

Second, all FYC students should be instructed in and made responsible for the correct (no more spaniels in Central America) use of computerized spelling, dictionary and grammar aids, as well as internet accessed bibliographic searches and formatting software. Guest lectures from reference librarians and/or representatives of the institution's IT department could introduce students to these functions. This would obviate a certain amount of instruction in and grading related to basic mechanics; there is no reason to teach students how to use a slide rule or an abacus when a calculator is available.

Third, teaching assistants should *not* be in charge of FYC classes. There is no shortage of qualified and experienced FYC instructors; many, as seen from the survey responses, currently shuttle between two or more campuses trying to cobble together a living. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation, researchers and theorists specializing in education, discourse analysis and linguistics have, for over forty years, agreed that written academic language proficiency is crucial to students' educational success; therefore, it is difficult to understand the rationale for assigning the least experienced and least qualified members of a department the task of teaching this critical subject. If the goal of English department administrators in assigning FYC classes to teaching assistants is to provide their graduate student with financial aid and teaching experience, it would be more ethical to assign them mid-19<sup>th</sup> century American literature students to practice on. I have another suggestion however.

Since FYC instructors state that they are overwhelmed by the sheer number of

student compositions they are required to read, comment on and grade, it would be entirely appropriate to give at least part of that burden to teaching assistants. This change would benefit FYC instructors (at least at universities where TA's are available) by providing help shoveling away at the paperwork blizzard that buries them each semester. It would benefit the FYC students whose papers would receive more thorough readings and commentary from less overwhelmed readers, and it would benefit the TA's whose work would be overseen by a practicing instructor. This last, it has always been my understanding, is primarily what a teaching assistantship is designed to provide; i.e., TA's learn from instructors in the course of assisting them *not* by replacing them. Finally, since the majority of instructors also state that FYC students need further instruction in basic mechanics, assign TAs the tasks of providing remedial grammar instruction, manning writing clinics and acting as tutors.

Where teaching assistants are not available to assume part of the assessment and remedial burdens (e.g., at community and four-year colleges, and smaller universities), a tutoring center staffed by qualified work study students should be made available for remedial grammar help. Even in these days of diminished Pell Grants, most colleges and smaller universities have some form of work study program. Every campus should also have a professionally staffed writing center with all departments on campus contributing a portion of their funding and/or administrative and faculty time to support it. While this would still leave FYC instructors at these institutions with the complete responsibility for student assessment, it would relieve them, at least, from a certain

amount of rote correction and draft reviews.

In light of the problems outlined in this study, these are admittedly modest proposals. The advantage they offer is that they are pragmatic; i.e., their implementation is possible. My final suggestion, although a simple one, costing nothing, may be more difficult to put into practice. It is this; all FYC instructors, their department chairs and their fellow faculty should be made aware of the well-documented (and often reiterated) proposition that the ability to write an acceptable academic paper is, for most students, *the* critical factor affecting future academic success; the obvious corollary being that FYC instructors have been charged with one of the most critical responsibilities in undergraduate education. They deserve support.

One of the recurring themes in the survey and interview results is the sense of isolation and relative helplessness many FYC instructors feel. Although, it is admittedly difficult to match schedules for meetings, there is no reason that contact cannot be maintained between FYC faculty and department chairs by, at a minimum, e-mail. It would be relatively simple, for example, to place a copy of proposed FYC texts in a teachers' lounge or some other common area in the department or to make pdfs available on-line and then to solicit input from the instructors. It should also be relatively simple for department chairs to obtain copies of the placement tests used at their institutions, to make those copies available and, again, solicit FYC instructors' opinions. A small show of professional respect might alleviate some degree of the frustration expressed by the instructors in this study.

#### ***5.4 Future directions***

In keeping with the idea of our incremental march toward knowledge, every study ends with suggestions for further research; I have three, presented in what I believe to be reverse order of importance. First, anyone interested in doing so is invited to re-examine and reuse any of the data gathered for this study and appended here. The instructor-respondents provided a great deal of information and, as noted in Chapter 3, the most interesting – that taken from the open-ended responses – was subjectively coded. Although a great deal of caution was exercised in that coding, it would be interesting to see what other coding systems and/or interpretations different perspectives might yield. Certainly, the instructors who took the time to respond to the questionnaire have every right to expect the data to be used as thoughtfully and completely as possible. Similarly, those who would like to build on this study (i.e., either to increase the sample for generalization or to discover contradictions) are more than welcome to use and/or amend the survey tool presented in Appendix A.

Second, I would encourage all scholars to undertake a critical examination of academic publications such as that attempted in Chapter 2 of this study. Book and article reviews that ignore the overused concept of professional courtesy and focus instead on exposing the “emperor’s new clothes” could provide the crucial impetus for the practical paradigm shift that seems to be peeking over the FYC horizon. In all likelihood, it would prove impossible to have such reviews published in the kind of professional journals that add to CV’s and, most assuredly, work of this kind could put a

serious crimp in prospective career plans<sup>22</sup> — still, I believe that, for anyone who cares about education, it is worth the risk.

Third, I believe that the answers of the seven interviewed instructors to the final, e-mailed question of what distinguishes AE from SWE indicates that academic language directly reflects the hierarchical, homogeneous world of academics. It would be both interesting and potentially valuable to follow up on this indication with a larger study focusing not only on this question but also on the question of what might happen to the culture if the language were consciously shifted to the more egalitarian, more heterogeneous hybrid forms suggested by Billig (2013), Bizzell (2002), Casanave (2010), Fernsten (2005), Hebb (2002), McCrary (2005) and a host of others.

### ***5.5 The fat lady sings***

To speak of education as the transmission of culture is to mystify the sense and significance of the process in a mechanical metaphor. Rather than transmission, education is described better as the conservation, criticism, and creation of culture, where culture is seen as a living tradition marked by contestation and choice. ... From a standpoint of value, we criticize what is and create culture anew to try to secure a future existence for beliefs and practices that we prize and hold precious (Giarelli, 1985, p. 33).

The question of FYC instruction, the teaching of AE, the sociocultural language of academics, relates directly to the question of, as Giarelli phrases it, what beliefs and practices we prize and hold precious. Should the written expression of academic culture consist, as the FYC instructors suggest, of the products of flexible minds expressing

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<sup>22</sup> Assuming compositionists concern themselves with dissertation citations, imagine what will happen if I ever wind up facing Lynch or Sanchez across the table at a hiring committee meeting.

passion and enthusiasm for strong, original topics, demonstrating perseverance in tracking down evidence, and the desire to communicate what they have discovered to others? Should the language itself be inclusive, allowing different points of view and different modes of expression as Bizzell and others have argued? If so, whatever programmatic and administrative or institutional changes need to be implemented in order to accomplish this should our primary goal. Believing the above and based on the results of this study, I have suggested a few pragmatic possibilities.

Now, let us imagine these few suggestions have been implemented. Students are learning the basics of critical thinking and sound argumentation in a required philosophy sequence. They are able to catch many of their own grammar and spelling mistakes thanks to grammar and spell checkers, and are beginning to find relevant sources using computerized library searches which they can reference in various formats with the aid of bibliographic software. If and when they encounter specific problems either in their writing or in understanding assignments, staff at tutoring and writing centers are available to answer their questions.

And now let us imagine that English instructors are able to return to the central concept that drew them to their discipline; i.e., the idea that writing serves to communicate unique experiences and thoughts. They have the time to demonstrate to students how various authors have accomplished this communication in various ways, to give students the confidence to develop their own voices, to lead them to realize that, regardless of their ages, gender orientations, SES, home languages, and ethnic

backgrounds, what they have to contribute is important, and to help them discover that the academic setting is an exciting place that offers them the resources to pursue any enthusiasm and to satisfy every curiosity.

Why not?



4. From the skills you've listed above, which is/are most difficult for your students to master? Please enter each on a separate line.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

5. Upon completion of the required English composition sequence at your institution, how well do you believe the average student is prepared to produce acceptable academic papers in subsequent classes?

	Unprepared	Somewhat prepared	Well prepared
Student readiness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. If you were put in charge of English composition classes at your college/university, what, if any, changes would you make to improve student outcomes?

7. Which best describes your position?

- TA
- Adjunct Faculty
- Fulltime Faculty

8. Which best describes the focus of your formal academic training?

- English literature
- English composition
- Creative writing
- ESL
- Other (please specify)

9. In total, how many years have you been teaching postsecondary English classes?

- Less than 2 years
- Between 2 and 5 years
- Between 5 and 10 years
- More than 10 years

10. How often do you read books and/or journal articles related to writing instruction?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Frequency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Any additional comments or observations?

Submit

**APPENDIX B: Solicitation to Participate – Letter 1**

Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at the University of Arizona and, for the past sixteen years, I have been working as a language instructor at a community college in Tucson, Arizona. At present, I am conducting research on the teaching of academic English at the postsecondary level. The purpose of this research is to provide an overview of instructors' perception of the subject matter, and to solicit their opinions on ways in which academic English instructions could be improved.

Previous research has demonstrated that academic English proficiency is a critical factor in students' success at the postsecondary level and has suggested that current programs do not consistently help students develop that proficiency; however, there has been no large-scale research on the topic incorporating the experiences and, more importantly, the opinions of classroom practitioners. The present study is designed to address that lack.

In a few days, I will be directing a second e-mail containing a link to an eleven-item survey to 1,000 English instructors (five each from two randomly chosen universities and two randomly chosen community colleges from each of the fifty states). You are one of the 1,000 and I would very much appreciate your help. The survey itself is completely anonymous, deals only with the subject of teaching academic English and will take no more than fifteen minutes to complete.

Thanking you in advance for your time and assistance,

Yosei Sugawara  
Teaching, Learning, & Sociocultural Studies  
College of Education  
University of Arizona  
[sugawara@email.arizona.edu](mailto:sugawara@email.arizona.edu)

**APPENDIX C: Solicitation to Participate – Letter 2**

Dear Professor [SURNAME]

I wrote to you last week asking for your assistance with a study focusing on the teaching of academic English at the postsecondary level. The research has been approved by the Dept. of Teaching, Learning & Sociocultural Studies in the University of Arizona's College of Education and by the University's Institutional Review Board.

The questionnaire will take from five to fifteen minutes of your time and, I assure you again, your responses to the questions will be completely anonymous. Individual and/or institutional identifiers are neither attached to the form nor solicited by the questions. In addition, SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) will be used for security encryption.

I hope to have received the majority of responses within two months of this mailing and to have compiled the results within the following four months. At that time, I will direct another e-mail to you and the other 999 instructors I've invited to be part of this study providing information on how to access the results on-line. This means that any comments or suggestions you wish to share about the teaching of academic English will be read by up to 999 of your colleagues so, if you have something to say on the topic, participation in this study will provide you with the opportunity.

If you have concerns about the authenticity of this request, and/or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the e-mail address below.

The link to the survey is:

Thank you,

Yosei Sugawara  
Teaching, Learning, & Sociocultural Studies  
College of Education  
University of Arizona  
sugawara@email.arizona.edu

**APPENDIX D: Question 3 Coded Responses – Community College**

Category	Code
Logic	L
Thesis formulation	Th
Composition	C
Basic mechanics	BM
Research and Reference	RR
Process	P
Style	S
Other	O
Indeterminate	I

Ref.#	Responses	Code
1	planning	P
2	organizational skills	C
3	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
4	ability to devise a thesis	Th
5	ability to write a thesis	Th
6	correct use of grammar	BM
7	ability to formulate and clearly state a thesis	Th
8	thesis formation	Th
9	ability to state a clear thesis	Th
10	critical reading skills	L
11	original ideas	O
12	ability to clearly articulate independent ideas	S
13	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
14	clear articulation of a thesis (main idea plus main points plus suggestion of pattern of organization)	Th, C
15	focus, organization, structure, clarity, flow, word selection, flow, and subordination	S, Th, L, C
16	clearly state thesis	Th
17	ability to assess audience and adjust writing to meet audience needs	S
18	strong, clear, concise thesis statement	Th
19	composing clear and complete sentences	BM
20	sentence structures	BM
21	clear thesis	Th
22	unifying purpose, clearly stated	Th

23	the ability to state and support a thesis	Th, L
24	understanding argumentation	L
25	analytical ability; ability to discern logical constructs from meaningless or illogical ones.	L
26	ability to write a concise sentence with interesting vocabulary	BM, S
27	a clear thesis statement	Th
28	student ability to develop ideas for good writing and possible supports for those ideas	L, P
29	the ability to play up and down the scale of abstraction, to use concrete details to elaborate on a general idea	L
30	paragraph structure (topic sentence, supporting details, etc.)	BM
31	critical analysis skills!	L
32	ability to clearly state a thesis related to specific prompt	Th
33	thoughtful consideration of the task, including timeline and criteria for success	P
34	clear and sustained focus	Th
35	critical thinking and reading	L
36	thesis and logical organization	Th, C
37	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
38	before content: correct mechanics and grammar	BM
39	critical thought (ideas beyond obvious)	L
40	clarity	S
41	correct MLA usage	RR
42	evaluating and processing sources	RR
43	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
44	correct use of citation forms	RR
45	ability to clearly state a thesis.	Th
46	good grammar	BM
47	good sentence structure - clarity and variety	S, BM
48	evidence of critical thinking	L
49	essay structure	C
50	developing ideas	I
51	thesis	Th
52	argumentation	L
53	clear thesis	Th
54	ability to recognize and state purpose of an essay	L
55	clear, direct thesis	Th
56	evidence of critical thinking (ability to reflect critically on text materials)	L
57	thesis	Th

58	inventing	P
59	high level of critical thinking	L
60	write clearly and concisely	S
61	clearly-stated thesis.	Th
62	awareness of audience	S
63	ability to state a clear thesis	Th
64	grammar and punctuation usage	BM
65	close reading	L
66	deep thinking skills	L
67	ability to state a thesis and identify it in sample essays	Th, L
68	strength of argument	L
69	critical thinking	L
70	textual analysis	L
71	ability to write a clearly stated thesis	Th
72	clear understanding of the task	O
73	well-developed thesis statement	Th
74	evaluating the credibility of online sources	RR
75	ability to identify and analyze different purposes and audiences and apply them for different scenarios	S
76	clearly state a thesis	Th
77	clearly state and develop a thesis	Th
78	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
79	knowledge of the Writing Process (Pre-writing, drafting...)	P
80	critical and logical thinking	L
81	depth and complexity of thought	L
82	clear thesis	Th
83	developing ideas	I
84	sentence clarity and coherence	BM
85	the understanding of why writing is important	O
86	understanding of the rhetorical situation (context, occasion, writer, genre audience, purpose, stance)	S
87	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
88	clearly stated thesis	Th
89	ability to use verbs correctly	BM
90	being able to follow directions	O
91	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
92	specific detail to support ideas.	L
93	thesis	Th
94	ability to narrow down a subject (focus) and to clearly state a thesis	Th
95	organization	C

96	clear thesis	Th
97	organization	C
98	critical thinking	L
99	ability to think deeply and critically on the subject matter	L
100	ability to state a thesis	Th
101	create a restricted and coherent THESIS statement in one declarative sentence.	Th
102	formation of structurally correct sentences and paragraphs	BM
103	clear thesis statement	Th
104	spelling	BM
105	proper English syntax	BM
106	correct grammar/sentence structure	BM
107	clear thesis	Th
108	thesis	Th
109	information literacy skills	I
110	organizing	C
111	research and documentation	RR
112	ability to convey meaning while varying sentence structures.	S
113	ability to exemplify and support thesis	L
114	ability to write topic sentences	BM
115	appropriate word choice	S
116	ability to organize paragraphs coherently in an essay	C
117	focus and organization of essay content	C
118	ability to find and use credible research sources	RR
119	critical writing skills	I
120	analytical skills	L
121	ability to format written work in a formal structure	C
122	evidence of critical thinking and analysis in the composition	L
123	use of paragraphs as structured units of information that provide evidence for specific points	L, C
124	full development for support	L
125	planning skills	P
126	clear paragraph structure	BM
127	ability to paragraph correctly	BM
128	clear thesis statement	Th
129	correct use of grammar skills	BM
130	logical structuring of ideas	L
131	critical thinking	L
132	understanding rhetorical methods	S
133	ability to isolate clear elements of thought; ability to write/make a	BM, L

	clear statement.	
134	ability to write a paragraph that pertains to a topic sentence	BM
135	logical argument (premises) to support the thesis	L
136	student ability to organize thoughts in a coherent fashion	L, C
137	the ability to vary sentence beginnings, to combine sentences together to create variety	S
138	essay organization	C
139	an awareness and the ability to analyze HOW an essay or a story is written and NOT an emotional reaction to content.	L
140	overall essay organization	C
141	thoughtful consideration of the audience, including expectations for language and genre	S
142	correct sentences	BM
143	correct use of citation form	RR
144	developing analysis	L
145	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
146	thesis and development plan	Th, P
147	ability to retrieve sources independently	RR
148	brevity	S
149	clear focus - thesis-like statements	Th
150	citation	RR
151	ability to subdivide the thesis into relevant points	L
152	ability to understand parts of sentence	BM
153	organization of support/skillful use of research data.	L, RR
154	good spelling	BM
155	proper use of grammar and punctuation	BM
156	original thought	O
157	prose readability	S
158	understanding and applying formatting requirements	C, RR
159	development of evidence	L
160	strong logic	L
161	strong, persuasive support	L
162	good organization	C
163	awareness and understanding of development	P
164	use of supporting material and/or sources to support a viewpoint	L, RR
165	sentence structure	BM
166	drafting	P
167	thesis formation	Th
168	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
169	effective use of secondary sources	RR

170	correct level of formality for purpose	S
171	ability to develop a coherent argument throughout the composition	L, C
172	correct use of sentence structures	BM
173	annotating texts	RR
174	clear writing skills	BM
175	ability to write a well structured, coherent essay	C
176	critical thinking	L
177	ability to understand and respond to complex ideas, materials, readings	L
178	engaging with sources	RR
179	providing detail in writing	S
180	organization	C
181	paragraphs that support the thesis	C
182	formulating a clear, original thesis statement	Th
183	ability to analyze, understand, and synthesize sources and to add to what's being said	L, RR
184	development of ideas	I
185	sentence structure	BM
186	ability to clearly state a topic sentence	BM
187	knowledge of the sentence structure	BM
188	clear and thoughtful organization including a thesis statement	C
189	clear central idea	Th
190	solid organization	C
191	focus and organization (includes stating a thesis)	Th, C
192	the belief that one has something worth saying	O
193	ability to clearly state and identify a thesis	Th, L
194	ability to thoroughly defend a thesis	L
195	ability to explain/develop/expand on the thesis	C
196	correct use of sentence structure	BM
197	sentence structure	BM
198	ability to cite sufficient, authoritative, relevant evidence	RR
199	proper quoting.	RR
200	paragraph organization and logic (Time, Space, Priority Order or Logical Argument)	L, C
201	organizational skills to promote flow of ideas and within and between paragraphs	C
202	critical thinking (avoiding logical fallacies)	L
203	development of ideas and subjects	I
204	thesis	Th
205	critical reading	L

206	ability to use complete sentences and avoid fragments	BM
207	ability to develop the thesis into a coherent essay	C
208	develop two- and three-level outlines analyzing part-to-whole relationships and logical sequences.	L, P
209	expression of logic and clarity	S
210	use of rhetorical strategies and examples	S
211	grammar	BM
212	good structure for paper -- beginning with thesis, middle with arguments, conclusion	C
213	structural cohesion	C
214	critical thinking skills that lead to good content	L
215	sent structure	BM
216	ability to think logically	L
217	understanding of critical thinking and analysis	L
218	clarity	S
219	correct use of citation formats.	RR
220	ability to articulate thoughts with written words	BM
221	ability to clearly organize a paper	C
222	correct use of complex and compound sentences (to avoid run-on and fragments)	BM
223	ability to proofread, edit and improve own work	P
224	development (using observation, experience and academic reading - critical analysis)	L, RR
225	lack of grammar errors	BM
226	paraphrasing	RR
227	natural sentence structure (as opposed to awkward/choppy with poor word choice)	BM, S
228	ability to use correct grammatical practice	BM
229	understanding and correct use of appropriate style formats (APA/MLA)	RR
230	effective integration of information and research	RR
231	correct sequence	C
232	ability to focus	O
233	ability to support a thesis statement with examples that effectively support the claim	L
234	focus - staying on topic	C
235	focus on organizational skills and coherent thought and progressive details	L, C
236	full development (support and explanation) of ideas	L, C
237	active reading	O

238	correct use of MLA citation	RR
239	ability to work thought into correct sentences. ability to write clear sentences.	BM
240	ability to write transitions between paragraphs	C
241	credibility of sources to support points	RR
242	sentence Fluency	S
243	writing a streamlined thesis	Th
244	thesis statement	Th
245	content transitions rather than transition word tags to move between sentences, ideas, and paragraphs.	C
246	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
247	production of prose that is both brief and clear	S
248	correct punctuation	BM
249	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
250	Proper grammar	BM
251	ability to organize a paper so that it flows logically	C
252	complex-compound sentences IF the student is adept grammatically to attempt such	BM
253	ability to evaluate sources	RR
254	standard American English	BM
255	ability to find valid academic sources to use for support	RR
256	clear thesis	Th
257	the ability to structure the support for the thesis	C
258	critical reading skills	L
259	critical interaction with arguments.	L
260	use of transitions	C
261	correct citation - MLA	RR
262	supporting claims	L
263	topic suitability	S
264	understanding and applying good organization skills	C
265	organization	C
266	integration of evidence or data	RR
267	careful, accurate use of sources	RR
268	recognizing and writing towards a specific audience.	S
269	understanding of "support"	L
270	a main idea or major claim	Th
271	citation	RR
272	ability of the writer to understand the essay's thesis and its implications for the essay	L
273	correct grammar and punctuation	BM

274	accuracy in selection of words and precise meanings	BM
275	signs of critical-thinking skills	L
276	clarity of argument	L
277	correct use of both simple and complex sentence structures	BM
278	the ability to properly outline and write an essay focusing on the points listed	C, P
279	critical thinking	L
280	identifying a thesis	Th
281	ability to format papers correctly and to provide proper documentation in text and on the Works Cited page using MLA standards	C, RR
282	use of evidence and analysis	L
283	developing a purpose	Th
284	clearly stating a thesis	Th
285	sentence structure	BM
286	thesis	Th
287	evidence and examples that are relevant to the audience	S, L
288	incorporating outside research into one's own argument	RR
289	understanding and skillful use of citation styles	RR
290	ability to correctly use grammar.	BM
291	clear phrasing of ideas	S
292	ability to elaborate on quality supporting evidence	L
293	knowledge of sequencing	C
294	synthesis of quality evidence	L, RR
295	concrete support	L
296	sentence structure	BM
297	smooth attribution and use of sources	RR
298	the passion about a topic	O
299	ability to effectively research and utilize available resources.	RR
300	ability to follow academic conventions in research paper writing	S
301	ability to remain focused	I
302	correct use of punctuation	BM
303	thesis statement	Th
304	organization of paragraphs, sentences and the overall essay structure	C
305	citing in MLA format.	RR
306	sentence Skills - punctuation, grammar, spelling	BM
307	ability to develop ideas fully and substantially to support the thesis idea	L
308	grammar, usage, and mechanics (GUM)	BM

309	focus	I
310	mechanics	BM
311	organizing ideas	L
312	organized thinking	L
313	ability to construct complex sentences correctly	BM
314	provide credible evidence in support of claims related to the THESIS statement.	L, RR
315	avoidance of plagiarism	RR
316	use of transitional words and phrases to show the connections between ideas	C
317	thesis/topic sentence construction	Th, BM
318	good research skills - evaluating Internet source materials	RR
319	transitional phrases	C
320	clear and correct citations	RR
321	citations	RR
322	thoughtful structure of essay	C
323	finding & using good support for opinions	RR
324	standard grammar	BM
325	ability to research sources to support ideas	RR
326	ability to correctly cite sources	RR
327	ability to state a clear thesis	Th
328	ability to use a variety of sentence structures	BM
329	standard Edited English	BM
330	organization skills	C
331	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
332	appropriate academic language and style	S
333	effective use of language and grammar	S
334	unity	C
335	ability to organize writing	C
336	correct formatting (MLA in my case)	RR
337	citation form	RR
338	clear and precise expression	S
339	enough skill with grammar so as to be able to transfer ideas into writing effectively	BM
340	creating a strong revision plan	P
341	comfort with standard usage; recognition of correct word forms.	BM
342	ability to integrate sources and use citations	RR
343	grammatical, punctuation, mechanical skills	BM
344	student ability to convey voice in writing	S
345	using paragraphs as mini-essays that go from general to specific	BM

346	rhetorical forms	S
347	incorporating the appropriate literary (or technical depending on the specific discipline) terms without excessive jargon.	S
348	paragraph development	BM
349	ability to benefit from constructive criticism	O
350	strong transitions	C
351	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
352	correct use of citation	RR
353	ability to explain or back up assertions	L
354	ability to summarize a source so as to avoid a hint of plagiarism	RR
355	correct use of complex sentences	BM
356	strong topic sentences	BM
357	the ability to clearly tie cited evidence to the point at hand	L, RR
358	critical discussion skills	L
359	balance between clarity and complexity in sentence structure.	S
360	a clearly stated thesis	Th
361	strong, specific thesis	Th
362	accurate documentation	RR
363	developing voice	P
364	use of SWE	BM
365	sentence variety	S
366	good writing skills -- sentence structure, grammar, etc.	BM
367	clear and recognizable thesis	Th
368	incorporation of sources	RR
369	ability to reference authoritative source materials and ability to distinguish valid or "quality" sources from junk	RR
370	rhetoric	S
371	revising	P
372	ability to synthesize disparate information into a cohesive essay	L, C
373	use of logic and organization of material	L, C
374	genuine analysis and synthesis	L
375	organization (sentence as well as paragraph level)	BM, C
376	correct use of punctuation, spelling and word choice	BM
377	correct use of proper format	I
378	developing a thesis	Th
379	reasoning logically	L
380	quality of writing	I
381	understanding audience/writing for readers	S
382	developing the thesis with evidence from a text	Th, RR
383	relevant support	L, RR

384	ability to revise with the audience in mind	S, P
385	using an outline to organize one's arguments and ideas	P
386	ability to maintain focus on an idea and develop this idea clearly throughout	C
387	correct use of citations	RR
388	mechanics	BM
389	correct citation	RR
390	knowledge of development of a thesis	P
391	correct citations	RR
392	organization of ideas	L
393	solid academic research	RR
394	the ability to write a clear thesis	Th
395	ability to correctly use correct documentation and formatting style	RR
396	appropriate grammar, spelling, and punctuation	BM
397	ability to provide evidence for topics that support the thesis	L
398	topic sentences	BM
399	application of reasoned critical thinking skills	L
400	creativity, insight, originality - Not predictable, entertaining	O
401	correct use of citation form, spelling, capitalization, Standard American English/grammar, syntax and complex sentence structure	BM, RR
402	proper punctuation	BM
403	logic	L
404	conveying specific information	I
405	use of specificity and avoidance of generalizations	S
406	good knowledge of proper mechanics	BM
407	accurately quote, paraphrase, and summarize information from sources.	RR
408	coherence	C
409	descriptive detail	S
410	ability to relate back to thesis throughout an essay - keep unified theme going	C
411	ability to proofread and produce error free prose	BM
412	proof reading & revising	P
413	computer / document formatting ability	I
414	ability to formulate and write a detailed essay	C
415	ability to recognize credible sources	RR
416	essay organizations	C
417	correct citation in text and Works Cited (MLA and/or APA)	RR
418	basic essay skills	C
419	grammar/punctuation	BM

420	correct grammar	BM
421	ability to connect ideas and make writing flow	S, C
422	consistent style (MLA in my case)	RR
423	command of Standard English	BM
424	integrate and cite source material	RR
425	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
426	ability to use vocabulary effectively.	S
427	ability to write and defend a thesis	Th, L
428	organization	C
429	student understanding for conventions, mechanics and grammar	BM
430	the known-new technique that creates coherence	P
431	to find the appropriate diction level required in formal, academic writing and avoiding excessively elevated or colloquial word choice.	S
432	conciseness and clarity in sentences	BM
433	knowledge of audience expectations for correctness, form, and style (thesis, support, citation, etc.)	S
434	interesting, apt, varied vocabulary	S
435	competent evaluation of sources	L
436	varying sentence structure	S
437	correct use of citation form	RR
438	professional/academic tone	S
439	good introduction and conclusion	C
440	the ability to select reputable sources	RR
441	application of sentence mechanics.	BM
442	knowledge of subject	O
443	academic tone	S
444	understanding and applying suitable evidence / research	L, RR
445	correct MLA format	RR
446	organization	C
447	correct documentation of sources	RR
448	original thinking	O
449	grasp of proper grammar	BM
450	ability to introduce texts and to write to an outside audience	S, RR
451	editing	P
452	ability to find, evaluate, and use sources	RR
453	provide examples or evidence and clear documentation	RR
454	correct use of appropriate support	RR
455	ability to organize a composition logically, while still maintaining a clear central thought	C
456	ability to use the proper tone for the type of writing being done	S

457	using evidence	L
458	correct use of citations	RR
459	rhetorical strategies	S
460	if research, understand how to apply MLA format according to guidelines	RR
461	appropriate usage of some form of documentation	RR
462	citing sources correctly and consistently	RR
463	appropriate documentation	RR
464	good use of standard, written English	BM
465	clarity in mechanics	BM
466	solid academic tone	S
467	the basic grammar concepts	BM
468	ability to revise and edit as appropriate for a better product	P
469	ability to explain how the evidence supports the topic or thesis, or understand whether or not the audience understands the connection	L
470	transition sentences	C
471	ability to read college level texts for higher levels of evaluation, analysis and response	L
472	correct use of appropriate tone	S
473	proper spelling	BM
474	flow of essay	C
475	evaluating credibility of sources	RR
476	avoiding the unclear pronoun "it"	BM
477	document use of sources through attribution, citation, and bibliographic entry.	RR
478	unity	C
479	effective research	RR
480	one idea per paragraph	BM
481	reading comprehension	O
482	organization/focus	Th, C
483	ability to use a fair range of distinct sentence types	BM
484	differentiating between summary and analysis	L
485	ability to cite, analyze and synthesize academic sources and readings.	RR
486	ability to compose a thesis statement; ability to structure a discussion into paragraphs that flow logically.	Th, C
487	ability to critically analyze a piece of writing	L
488	the ability to get words on a page, to plan, to create raw material in order to have something to work with, the ability to use writing as	P

	thinking not just the product of thought	
489	to distinguish the appropriate use of quotes, summary, and paraphrases.	RR
490	successful experience in producing and revising work which meets high expectations for content and form	O
491	functional organization	C
492	ability to structure and organize a text, including use of transitions	C
493	correct citation format	RR
494	support for statements	L
495	the ability to write complex sentences with logical predication	L, BM
496	understanding of formal register and academic tone.	S
497	accurate diction	BM
498	paragraph unity	C
499	advanced sentence structure	S
500	writing in the active voice and selecting synonyms instead of vague pronouns	S
501	correct grammar	BM
502	ability to use an appropriate academic tone	S
503	organization	C
504	originality of thought	O
505	organization	C
506	word choice and sentence structure	S, BM
507	HARD WORK	O
508	ability to choose a timely, interesting, and specific topic	Th
509	correct citation format	RR
510	understanding grammar and usage	BM
511	academic discourse including tone, diction and voice	S
512	ability to communicate with a specific audience for a specific purpose	S
513	integrating the ideas of others	RR
514	grammar	BM
515	examining logic of arguments and claims	L
516	proper grammar	BM
517	integrate source information fluently and correctly using source-descriptive verb phrases.	RR
518	development	I
519	critical thinking	L
520	good synthesis of sources	RR
521	mature writing style	S
522	ability to use outside sources effectively	RR

523	good mechanical and language skills	BM
524	ability to develop an enriched conclusion	L, C
525	ability to organize thoughts and support	L
526	thesis and topic sentences encompass cause and effect relationships (and therefore reflect a more complex understanding of text) if they are complex sentences.	S
527	unique and resounding student voice	S
528	understanding and effective use of drafting and revision process	P
529	the ability to punctuate acceptable to Standard Written English	BM
530	proper citation	RR
531	good use of grammar and spelling	BM
532	clarity	S
533	organization and structure	C
534	addressing opposing points of view	L
535	understanding of audience	S
536	careful revision	P
537	ability to research	RR
538	correct use of grammar and Standard Written English	BM
539	understanding of topic	O
540	revise for substantive change in content and diction for specific purpose-to-audience relationships.	S, P
541	citation style/knowledge	RR
542	grammatical problems and MLA rules. **I am putting this last because I strongly believe that instructors who give such busy work priority have been reduced to busy work because of their excessive work schedules.	BM, RR
543	adequate development	I
544	appropriate use of detail and abstraction to illustrate analysis	L
545	mature vocabulary	S
546	proper use of research style	RR
547	grammar and usage	BM
548	paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting from an outside source	RR
549	careful editing/proofreading	P
550	proofreading	P
551	correct use of citation form	RR
552	having a point	Th
553	recognize, identify, and correct errors through proofreading and editing skills.	BM
554	addressing the assignment itself	O

**APPENDIX E: Question 3 Coded Responses – University**

Category	Code
Logic	L
Thesis formulation	Th
Composition	C
Basic mechanics	BM
Research and Reference	RR
Process	P
Style	S
Other	O
Indeterminate	I

Ref. #	Responses	Code
1	clear and thoughtful thesis (argument)	Th, L
2	ability to organize and present thoughts clearly, including thesis statements and topic sentences	C
3	clearly state a thesis	Th
4	engagement with the topic of the composition	I
5	correct citation form	RR
6	meaningful idea development/insight	L
7	ability to clearly state a complex thesis.	Th
8	ability to synthesize information from different sources	L
9	organization	C
10	using a process approach to writing that helps the student determine topic, and provide support of thesis.	P
11	ability to clearly state central and supporting ideas	Th, L
12	clearly state thesis	Th
13	clear organizational structures including essay organization and paragraph organization	C
14	effectively understanding and responding to a given rhetorical situation	S
15	ability to state a clear thesis	Th
16	the ability to write a grammatically correct sentence that also develops a clear thought.	BM
17	clear thesis	Th
18	forming a clear argument	L
19	clear thesis	Th
20	clear theses	Th
21	correct use of complex sentences	BM

22	reading and analysis that results in a clear understanding of the rhetorical situation.	L
23	awareness of audience and tone	S
24	clarity	S
25	cohesiveness of ideas	L
26	critical reader	L
27	identification of audience and purpose (outward-focused writing)	S
28	attention to detail	O
29	clear, concise thesis statement	Th
30	correct grammar	BM
31	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
32	ability to frame an argument.	L
33	clear thesis	Th
34	clearly stated thesis	Th
35	close reading skills	L
36	clearly stated thesis	Th
37	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
38	adequate development of an idea, especially in argumentation	L
39	arguable thesis	Th, L
40	clearly state a thesis	Th
41	clarity	S
42	an ear for academic English	S
43	using strategies to develop ideas or a focus for the Composition	P
44	ability to state a focus or thesis clearly	Th
45	A WELL-ORGANIZED AND BALANCED ESSAY	C
46	a clearly worded thesis.	Th
47	a clear and appropriate topic	Th
48	using purposeful development that supports the thesis	L
49	paragraph development	BM
50	working with source material to generate argument	L
51	thesis statement	Th
52	think critically and analytically about the subject matter	L
53	ability to critically interrogate a topic rather than jumping to conclusions	L
54	understanding of rhetorical situation, purpose, audience and rhetorical appeals	S
55	ability to analyze with insight	L
56	clear syntax	BM

57	focus	I
58	genuine interest in your own ideas	O
59	knowledge of the composition topic	RR
60	a clear thesis	Th
61	use of argumentative and analytical forms of thought	L
62	critical thinking/critical approach to sources and topics	L
63	clear thesis throughout the paper.	C
64	clearly communicate main idea with relevance to the reader	S, Th
65	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
66	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
67	good understanding of grammar, punctuation , and mechanics	BM
68	nuanced thinking	L
69	citations	RR
70	ability to analyze and write into a new rhetorical situation	S, L
71	clarity	S
72	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
73	clear writing, clear purpose in writing	S
74	critical Reading	L
75	a clearly stated thesis	Th
76	ability to read and understand college-level texts	O
77	creating a thorough plan the essay: pre-writing stages, which includes creating a strong thesis statement and brainstorm list of thesis statement major points.	Th, P
78	content that expresses a unique and well-thought out viewpoint	Th, L
79	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
80	ability to clearly state thesis statement	Th
81	ability to clearly state a thesis and then support and prove that thesis is very important	Th, L
82	ability to read critically and infer meaning and intent in academic texts	L
83	to organize arguments and information logically	L
84	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
85	appropriate MSS form--APA-MLA	RR
86	American style essay organization including the use of topic sentences and thesis statements	C
87	careful critical thinking about an issue in order to develop an approach.	L
88	awareness of self as a language-user (spoken and written language)	O

89	thesis	Th
90	clarity	S
91	clear Organization and Effective Transitions within and between paragraphs	C
92	clear thesis	Th
93	critical reading skills	L
94	Students who actually read books can write sentences. Students who don't have a lot of trouble. I think an apt analogy would be trying to learn an instrument without ever listening to music.	O
95	clarity	S
96	ability to develop a thesis	Th
97	an understanding of the rhetorical context (audience, purpose, situation/occasion, voice)	S
98	clear, arguable thesis	Th, L
99	clearly stated thesis.	Th
100	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
101	the capacity to perceive patterns in complex phenomena.	L
102	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
103	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
104	drawing inferences from evidence	L
105	rhetoric	S
106	sophisticated development of ideas	L
107	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
108	strong textual evidence	L
109	ability to produce clear, grammatical sentences, avoiding predication, logic, and structure problems	BM
110	organization of essay	C
111	awareness of the 3 parts (prewrite, write, rewrite) and 7 steps (prewrite, draft, respond, revise, edit, proofread, publish) of the writing process	P
112	correct formatting	C
113	fulfillment of assignment guidelines	O
114	ability to integrate outside sources into an argument or explanation.	RR
115	abide by academic conventions such APA or MLA style	RR
116	development - details and support for a thesis	L
117	clearly stating thesis	Th
118	ability to organize ideas and use transitions effectively	C
119	develop cogent, analytical paragraphs	L, P

120	clear sentence structure	BM
121	discovering the best ways to appeal to a given audience	S
122	ability to read, understand, and synthesize research material	RR
123	the ability to read, understand, and integrate research into writing.	RR
124	clear organizational structure	C
125	integrating evidence into the essay	RR
126	a balanced argument	L
127	correct use of supporting material	RR
128	correct use of citation form	RR
129	thoughtful reflection on the rhetorical problem leading to an insightful thesis.	Th, L
130	a clear purpose for writing	Th
131	strong thesis	Th
132	clear thesis and claims to start paragraphs	Th, C
133	good self-critic	P
134	construction of a strong thesis	Th, L
135	what I call "the art of seeing" - everything	I
136	supporting details that are clearly related to the thesis statement/writing cohesively	L, C
137	good organization	C
138	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
139	ability to use evaluate and employ evidence to support an argument.	L, RR
140	adequate, specific support for thesis	L
141	clear topic sentences supporting the thesis	L, C
142	clear controlling idea	Th
143	organization	C
144	ability to support thesis with germane examples	L
145	the ability to organize in a coherent way ideas	C
146	structure	C
147	adequately develop theme	C
148	organization	C
149	the discipline to start early and edit drafts	O
150	developing a clear thesis	Th
151	ability to link sections or paragraphs clearly to the focus or thesis	C
152	A CLEAR THESIS	Th
153	an organization that is convincing and easy to follow.	C
154	critical reading, writing, and thinking skills	L

155	clear and specific expression of ideas	S
156	development of original ideas and arguable claims	Th, L
157	having a critical stance	L
158	organization	C
159	perform effective scholarly research with institutional resources	RR
160	ability to find and weigh evidence	RR
161	generating various interpretations of any given text	O
162	clear thesis statement	Th
163	in-text citation	RR
164	ability to understand and participate in critical conversations	L
165	logical reasoning	L
166	paragraphs that are focused on one idea that supports the thesis	C
167	audience awareness	S
168	formulating a thesis	Th
169	organization and structure	C
170	write in a logically organized, easy to read format	L, C
171	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
172	ability to draft appropriate topic sentences in support of a thesis	L, BM
173	clearly stating a thesis	Th
174	being well-informed about the topic	RR
175	thesis	Th
176	ability to analyze the rhetorical, structural, and stylistic features of a genre	S, L
177	creativity	O
178	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
179	solid and logical structure	L, C
180	objective Summary	RR
181	clearly stated reasons why the thesis is correct (main points)	L
182	clear purpose (argumentative thesis and a logical supporting structure)	Th, L, C
183	creating a sentence outline to create clear topic sentences: these sentences will be used in the essay.	P
184	cohesion so that the reader can follow the logic	C
185	ability to support thesis	L
186	ability to organize paragraphs	C
187	to have a clear organization that flows easily throughout the essay	C

188	organization of ideas and content (for clarity, especially)	C
189	to apply strategies of the writing process to research essays	P
190	organize ideas to support the thesis	L, C
191	appropriate genre--suitable for aim and audience	S
192	correct use of complex sentence structures and a variety of sentence structures	BM
193	the ability to read and research in order to build a case or make an argument.	L, RR
194	being able to read for structure of argument and authorial style as well as content	L, S
195	organization	C
196	development	I
197	proper word usage	BM
198	paragraph coherency and unity	C
199	critical thinking skills	L
200	ability to engage the reader	S
201	ability to clearly articulate a thesis	Th
202	clear thesis and frame of reference	Th, L
203	organization of ideas: Writing to a thesis	C
204	well organized essay.	C
205	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
206	the capacity to develop hypotheses to account for those patterns.	L
207	ability to clearly support a thesis	L
208	ability to stick to arguing that thesis all the way through, without straying	C, L
209	clarity	S
210	thesis construction	Th
211	use of evidence to support an argument	L, RR
212	correct use of citation form	RR
213	logical structure/organization	L, C
214	ability to avoid plagiarism if outside sources are used, including citing sources accurately and clearly	RR
215	appropriate mechanics in writing	BM
216	awareness of and appreciation for the recursive, non-linear nature of the writing process	P
217	balance of evidence and interpretation	C
218	clear and correct expression	BM
219	ability to analyze multiple sides of an issue.	L
220	ability to construct a thesis that ties up the whole paper	Th, C

221	mechanics/conventions - spelling, grammar, and punctuation	BM
222	providing appropriate and valid support for thesis	L
223	ability to adequately develop ideas with details	L
224	usefully and constructively integrate secondary research	RR
225	understanding of rhetoric	S
226	constructing well-supported, well-reasoned arguments	L
227	ability to use coordination and subordination effectively to create "college level" sentences	S, BM
228	the ability to understand plagiarism and correctly cite information.	RR
229	application of course material (developing a strong argument, writing an effective narrative, etc)	L, C
230	determining the validity of sources	RR
231	effective use of language	S
232	clear control over language and mechanics	S, BM
233	ability to elucidate the issue, problem, and solution within your text and the texts that you read to prepare for your contribution.	L
234	integration of academic discourse language	S
235	supporting evidence	L
236	ability to provide and explain/analyze evidence	L, RR
237	a creative or organizational process or formula for beginning assignments	P
238	mastery of unity and coherence	C
239	consistency and higher level critical thinking	L
240	sentence variety	S
241	strong thesis	Th
242	correct use of citation form	RR
243	ability to understand how different perspectives value cause evidence to be valued differently.	O
244	original thinking	O
245	clear argument supported throughout essay	L
246	critical thinking skills	L
247	sentence level clarity	BM
248	ability to articulate ideas in a clear, concise manner	BM
249	expressing ideas in clear and expressive syntax and diction	S
250	crafting clear sentences	BM
251	using concrete details and examples	S
252	the student's commitment to saying something that is important to the student	O

253	organizing the parts of the essay into a coherent whole	C
254	ability to use detail convincingly to support the thesis and its linkage to sections	L, C
255	CORRECT USE OF COMPLEX SENTENCES	BM
256	focus, both on thesis and topic sentences.	Th, C
257	strong thesis and purpose	Th
258	unified paragraphs on a well-defined topic sentence	C
259	understanding how to use sources	RR
260	organization of ideas	C
261	clarity of thought	L
262	clearly state a thesis	Th
263	ability to articulate a thesis	Th
264	strong thesis statements	Th
265	clear and relevant topic sentences (tied to controlling idea)	C
266	punctuation	BM
267	clarity of expression	S
268	creativity	O
269	sentences that are logically ordered	C
270	goal of the writing to a specific audience	S
271	research: locating sources, reading/comprehending sources	RR
272	thoughtful writing	I
273	offer support (primary or secondary research) for each claim made	L, RR
274	correct use of transitions throughout writing	C
275	selecting, analyzing, and discussing sources	L, RR
276	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
277	clarity	S
278	ability to write effectively with sources, which includes being able to assess the credibility of a source, read deeply, effectively paraphrase and summarize, effectively select brief direct quotes, and effectively cite.	L, RR
279	syntactical mastery	BM
280	correct use of citation form	RR
281	authoritative and credible evidence	L, RR
282	narrative rhetoric	S
283	specific evidence to support each point--not generalizations that are not proven true	L
284	strong analysis (explain and make use of complex evidence)	L
285	writing a complete rough draft of the essay	P
286	use of a variety of sentence structures to achieve desired	S

	emphasis and showing of relationships	
287	ability to evaluate sources	RR
288	correct use of grammar—i.e., no passive or redundant construction	S
289	sentence structure	BM
290	a good vocabulary that allows precise language and correct use of any necessary jargon	S, BM
291	to annotate, summarize, paraphrase and quote sources correctly	RR
292	develop ideas	I
293	appropriate organization; intro, background--establishing context--, thesis, main body--(relationship of informing to persuading), conclusion	C
294	recognition of an audience with certain expectations and knowledge.	S
295	acquired habit of reading for pleasure	O
296	b/c statements (connecting example to thesis or point)	C
297	ability to execute a purpose	O
298	clear paraphrasing	RR
299	accurate summary	RR
300	clear grammatical structures	BM
301	perfection (or close to it) grammatically	BM
302	ability to structure an argument through topic sentences that relate to the thesis	L, C
303	clear and precise topic sentences for developmental paragraphs, coherence	C
304	correct sentence structure more important than complex sentence structures	BM
305	cohesive sentences and paragraphs.	C
306	correct use of citation form	RR
307	the capacity to fund the structure of their own ideas and to break those ideas down into subunits.	L
308	ability to organize main ideas	L
309	ability to critically analyze texts and respond to them	L
310	focus	I
311	distinction between own voice and voices of cited authors	RR
312	synthesis of ideas	L
313	correct use of complex sentence structure	BM
314	credible sources (when applicable)	RR
315	ability to connect sentences and ideas together smoothly, i.e.,	C

	write cohesively	
316	correct citation	RR
317	desire and ability to invest time in the writing process	O
318	clear "so what?"	C
319	original and eloquent expression	S
320	proper use of citation format.	RR
321	ability to add syntax variety with well-crafted transitions	S
322	precise and proper vocabulary and word choice	S, BM
323	using logic and reasoning to make their argument or major points	L
324	ability to express ideas in syntactically correct Standard English	BM
325	use correct citation format	RR
326	logical expression	L
327	creating well-organized, cohesive documents	C
328	ability to use precise words and pronouns with specific referents	BM
329	analytical thinking	L
330	correct use of grammar	BM
331	using sources in an effective manner	RR
332	play with language	O
333	ability to know when stasis is and is not a part of your relationship with the audience.	S
334	textual support	RR
335	correct citation	RR
336	mastery of basic grammar and mechanics	BM
337	intrinsic concern regarding quality of work	O
338	ability to express ideas clearly	BM
339	supporting examples	L
340	ability to understand how values inform the decision-making process.	O
341	correct use of standard English	BM
342	correct use of MLA	RR
343	ability to connect ideas to controlling idea	L
344	ability to properly document and integrate secondary material	RR
345	independence of thought	O
346	voice	S
347	correct grammar and usage	BM
348	the discernment to choose topics that foster interesting thought at the appropriate level of detail for the student and the assignment	Th

349	developing specific examples	P
350	ability to write varied sentences with a sense of rhythm	S, BM
351	GREAT USE OF LINKERS	S, BM
352	the ability to know what a complete sentence consists of.	BM
353	identifying the audience	S
354	using primary and secondary sources effectively	RR
355	understanding when to document sources	RR
356	proper in-text citation	RR
357	content	I
358	craft and develop cohesive body paragraphs via relevant topic sentences which relate back to the thesis and relate to the content of each paragraph	C
359	ability to engage with the opposition thoughtfully	L
360	good use of evidentiary support	L
361	good organization of paragraphs	C
362	organization	C
363	mental flexibility	O
364	good command of language--diction	BM
365	organization of thesis, evidence from authoritative sources, clear rebuttal of well expressed objections	L, C, RR
366	integrating sources into an essay/paper	RR
367	MLA/APA format	RR
368	write free of grammatical and syntax errors	BM
369	correct use of MLA formatting in essay	RR
370	constructing readable sentences	BM
371	correct use of citation	RR
372	concision	S
373	develop an effective writing process, that allows a piece to develop over time, informed by reader feedback	P
374	knowledge of conventions	BM
375	revision	P
376	critical thinking	L
377	correct citation of all external sources used	RR
378	application of conventions (grammar/mechanics/citation/quote integration)	BM, RR
379	mastering basic grammar skills and all four sentence structures to help in the proofreading of rough draft	BM, P
380	clarity of expression	S
381	ability to use sources properly	RR
382	ability to understand given writing tasks	O

383	to analyze, synthesize, and think critically about information gathered from sources.	L, RR
384	stay focused on thesis	C
385	appropriate style--suitable for genre, audience, and aim	S
386	the ability to recognize and make various moves -- argue the other side, dissent, assess uses and limits, make a concession, etc.	L
387	perseverance, patience with self and process	O
388	ability to synthesize ideas of others into one's writing	RR
389	minimal direct quotation	S
390	appropriate word choice	S
391	clear thesis statement	Th
392	sound thought process	L
393	quote integration from primary and secondary sources	RR
394	appropriate illustrations and use of other modes (description, definition, narration, etc.)	S
395	correct Works Cited page and in-text citations	RR
396	proper grammar and diction.	BM
397	ability to organize thoughts into a logical order	L
398	the ability to employ many "pre-writing" techniques to accomplish all of the above	P
399	critical thinking	L
400	organization of thoughts and arguments in an effective manner	L, C
401	thesis	Th
402	varied and appropriate sentence structure	S, BM
403	ability to support a thesis	L
404	engaging voice	S
405	ability to develop and explain ideas clearly and in depth, anticipating reader questions or confusions	S, L
406	ability to freewrite (using Natalie Goldberg's seven "rules for writing practice")	P
407	thesis statement that is both clear and complex	Th
408	effective organization	C
409	ability to develop content without losing readers' attention	S
410	sentence structure	BM
411	organizing ideas, forecasting, and using transitional devices so reader can follow the writer's points	C
412	ability to paraphrase and summarize	RR
413	vary sentence structure	S
414	correct understanding and use of appropriate citation methods	RR

415	conducting appropriate research on an academic topic	RR
416	ability to focus on a task long enough to understand it and think it through	O
417	using an effective writing process.	P
418	MLA formatted citations	RR
419	creating a sense of flow within the essay	C
420	effective use of sources	RR
421	ability to link claim, proof, reason, evidence, and explanation.	L
422	critical thinking	L
423	effectively addressing the requirements of specific genres	S
424	genuine curiosity	O
425	correct formatting (MLA)	RR
426	understanding how the rhetorical situation informs choice of genre and citation form.	S
427	requirements of assignment met	O
428	strong introduction	C
429	making clear transitions between ideas	C
430	critical thinking	L
431	citing sources	RR
432	critical thinking skills	L
433	the composure to "stay cool" and work well when overwhelmed	O
434	using specific language/avoiding words such as "thing(s)" and "stuff."	BM
435	ability to follow standard rules of grammar and punctuation at least remotely	BM
436	CORRECT USE OF CITATION FORM	RR
437	correct grammar.	BM
438	supporting the topic with research	RR
439	proficiency with standard MLA or APA citation formats	RR
440	ability to organize material logically	C
441	careful organization of ideas and smooth transitions	C
442	proper use of citations and references pages	RR
443	clarity	S
444	stick-to-it-ive-ness	O
445	interest in composition topic	O
446	correct register for vocabulary (academic versus colloquial/formal)	S
447	choosing rhetorically appropriate organization	S
448	grammar	BM

449	use a variety of sentence structures	S
450	correct use of citation form	RR
451	transitions between sentences and paragraphs	C
452	introducing sources: author, title, and credibility of source	RR
453	following assignment	O
454	analysis	L
455	language that is formal enough for academia--no slang or conversational language	S
456	persistence and engagement	O
457	revise and proofread rough draft of essay thoroughly	P
458	understanding the roles of writer and reader in academic English papers	S
459	ability to correctly cite sources	RR
460	fluency in sentence construction (which is related to use of standard conventions and care in proofreading))	BM
461	to locate and evaluate print and online sources	RR
462	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
463	identifying and deploying relevant evidence	L, RR
464	the ability to "design" and clearly state a thesis.	Th
465	synthesis	L
466	understanding of genre conventions	S
467	ability to move beyond simple edits of a draft to taking it through a development process	P
468	argumentation and persuasion strategies	L
469	correct use of MLA format	RR
470	ability to produce clear and concise writing	BM
471	the willingness to get lost.	O
472	ability to write effective transitions	C
473	time management	O
474	verb agreement	BM
475	a distinct voice (appropriate to academic papers)	S
476	few editing/mechanical errors	BM
477	ability to write a well-developed and cohesive introduction and conclusion	C
478	ability and desire to eventually focus on one main topic or question for investigation	O, Th
479	good paragraphing	BM
480	effective use and correct citation of sources	RR
481	ability to expand the current research scope by making certain an elevation in the conclusion	C

482	proper citation - accurate MLA or APA format and style and free of plagiarism	RR
483	correctly using complex sentence structures	BM
484	ability to correct grammar	BM
485	show a clear understanding of audience/rhetorical situation	S
486	appropriate vocabulary	S
487	adapting tone and style to a given situation and audience	S
488	an understanding of the need to document use of sources	RR
489	using correct citation	RR
490	ability to show the relationships between one claim and the next as the writer builds the argument.	L
491	imaginative thinking	O
492	effectively incorporating source materials into sourced papers (no papers with multiple personality disorder!)	RR
493	dedication to the revision process	O
494	forming complete sentences	BM
495	punctuality	O
496	strong conclusion	C
497	integrating quotes	RR
498	choosing a topic	Th
499	a general knowledge of English mechanics	BM
500	including research, if appropriate, and citing it according to professional format (MLA, APA, etc.)	RR
501	GOOD INCORPORATION OF SOURCES	RR
502	knowledge of citation methods and when to cite.	RR
503	correctly citing the sources both in-text and on a reference page	RR
504	grammatical concerns: usage, sentence structure, punctuation	BM
505	ability to form complex sentences for maximum expression of ideas	BM, S
506	academic writing style	S
507	punctuation that aides readability	BM
508	ability to find, assess, and process various "sources"	RR
509	correct punctuation	BM
510	correct documentation	RR
511	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
512	ability to vary paragraph lengths	S
513	correct use of citation form	RR
514	identifying salient supporting arguments and counter-arguments	L

515	research	RR
516	a conclusion that does more than restate the thesis. It needs to tell us what we take away from the proven thesis-the lesson or the effect the information may have	C
517	create final draft after proofreading rough draft 3-100 times (this is an inside joke between my students and me).	P
518	clear and logical organization	C
519	to use MLA and APA style citation forms correctly	RR
520	correct use of English grammar	BM
521	discussing evidence	L
522	the ability to construct grammatically correct sentences.	BM
523	attributive tags and in-text citation	RR
524	targeting adequately a text to a specific audience	S
525	ability to correct one's grammar: especially sentence structure, subject/verb agreement and pronoun/antecedents	BM
526	diction, syntax, grammar, style, and mechanical usage (avoid pronoun shifts, plural/singular)	S, BM
527	ability to provide specific concrete details and imagery	S
528	the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly without oversimplifying them.	S
529	correct use of complex sentence structure	BM
530	conciseness	S
531	appropriate word choices for audience	S
532	ability to avoid grammar errors, including spelling, word form, and agreement problems	BM
533	awareness of self and others as "audience" AND desire to communicate with self and others	O
534	ability to structure the ideas in a logical and coherent way	C, L
535	basic research skills	RR
536	giving credit through correct use of citation for and documentation	RR
537	when and how to include quotes, citations, etc.	RR
538	enhancing writing style	S
539	ability to paraphrase	RR
540	displaying an appropriate level of diction	S
541	ability to stay on topic and not go off on interesting, but ultimately confusing, tangents.	C, L
542	correct use of standard citation formats (MLA for my department)	RR
543	strong self-editing skills	BM

544	correct use of grammar and mechanics	BM
545	effectively using summary	RR
546	narrowing a topic	P
547	the technical skills to use (forgive this redundancy) technologies like Microsoft Word, search engines, and on-line course materials to find and achieve correct formatting	RR
548	MASTERY OF FORMAL AND ACADEMIC WRITING (NO USE OF THE FIRST PERSON, CONTRACTIONS)	S
549	avoid plagiarism	RR
550	natural integration of quotes	RR
551	variability in sentence structure (that aids fluent reading)	S
552	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
553	strong work ethic	O
554	correct use of academic citation formats	RR
555	correct use of grammatical structures such as punctuation and verb tense	BM
556	organization	C
557	remembering to write for a reader: engage the reader with concrete stories, interesting quotes, intriguing questions	S
558	formatting	C
559	clarity of meaning on a sentence level	BM
560	to control the syntax, diction, punctuation and grammar of written language	BM
561	correct use of citation	RR
562	paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting	RR
563	the ability to make transitions.	C
564	basic grammar	BM
565	writing with a purpose	O
566	appropriate research format when applicable	RR
567	correct use of punctuation marks	BM
568	matters of academic form are largely irrelevant; they can look that stuff up in handbooks.	I
569	grammatically sound writing	BM
570	ability to proofread carefully and accurately, catching errors, typos, and omitted words	BM
571	awareness of and ability to work with HOCs (higher order concerns / global revisions / "the big picture") and LOCs (lower order concerns / sentence-level revisions and edits / "the close-up picture")	BM, P
572	ability to use different writing techniques to bring out ideas	P

573	critical thinking in evaluating sources	L
574	making major revisions and editing to improve the paper before it is complete.	P
575	ability to proofread punctuation and grammatical errors	BM
576	clarification of ideas	P
577	a sense of audience and how to make accommodations for audience	S
578	ability to write cohesively as well as coherently	C, BM
579	It is important that they "hear" and really see what they write.	O
580	transitions between paragraphs and sentences	C
581	overall organization of ideas	C
582	reading research	RR
583	the confidence to find something to say and sustain it over the course of a paper	Th, C
584	correct usage and grammar	BM
585	meaningfully supporting the controlling idea with personal or researched material	L, RR
586	correct use of citation form	RR
587	grammar / mechanics / usage	BM
588	ability to write clear and concise prose	S
589	Information literacy	I
590	editing: grammar, proofreading, correct citation style	BM, RR, P
591	editing/proofreading	P
592	correct and effective sentence structure	BM
593	to express their key ideas clearly as assertive thesis statements and topic sentences	S, C
594	citing and documenting sources	RR
595	the ability to carefully set up the context for another person's ideas when it is necessary to quote, summarize or paraphrase	RR
596	creativity	O
597	using documentation styles adequately	RR
598	various conclusions, depending on the context	I
599	ability to smoothly merge source material with original thought	RR
600	develop a consistent and original voice	S

**APPENDIX F: Question 4 Coded Responses – Community College**

Category	Code
Logic	L
Thesis formulation	Th
Composition	C
Basic mechanics	BM
Research and Reference	RR
Process	P
Style	S
Other	O
Indeterminate	I

Ref. #	Responses	Code
1	understanding of critical thinking and analysis	L
2	standard grammar	BM
3	clearly writing a thesis.	Th
4	ability to research sources to support ideas	RR
5	paper organization	C
6	ability to state a clear thesis	Th
7	ability to proofread, edit and improve own work	BM
8	correct in text citation (integration and format)	RR
9	ability to find and use credible research sources	RR
10	critical reading skills	L
11	analytical skills	L
12	My students struggle with having independent thoughts and getting them down in an acceptable structure for formal writing.	P
13	critical thinking and analysis	L
14	effective development of thesis	C
15	word selection	S
16	thesis statement	Th
17	inability to assess audience and adjust writing to meet audience needs	S
18	clear paragraph structure	BM
19	paragraphing	BM
20	sentence structure	BM
21	correct grammar	BM
22	clear and precise expression	S
23	stating the thesis	Th

24	ability to cite, analyze and synthesize academic sources and readings.	RR, L
25	comfort with standard usage; appropriate academic tone.	BM, S
26	ability to critically analyze a piece of writing	L
27	logical argument to support the thesis	L
28	ability to convey voice	S
29	the ability to play up and down the scale of abstraction, to use concrete details to elaborate on a general idea	L
30	paragraph structure	BM
31	the ability to read and analyze text for HOW it is written and WHY the writer makes particular choices such as structure, types of evidence, tone shifts, word choice, etc. to effectively develop the central idea or main assertion for a specific audience.	L, S
32	correct use of complex sentence structures to achieve both clarity and variety in writing	BM, S
33	ability to benefit from constructive criticism	O
34	clear and sustained focus	Th
35	competent evaluation of sources	L
36	thesis and logical organization, developing analysis, proper grammar, correct use of citation, varying sentence structure	RR, C, L, BM, S, Th
37	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
38	mechanics and grammar--Most have not mastered these--not being emphasized at the middle and secondary levels as they once were--students are actually semi-literate	BM
39	correct use of complex sentences	BM
40	good introduction and conclusion	C
41	MLA Works Cited pages	RR
42	citation	RR
43	ability to subdivide the thesis into relevant points	L
44	critical reading skills	L
45	organization of support/skillful use of research data.	L, RR
46	good grammar	BM
47	MLA citations	RR
48	evidence of critical thinking	L
49	prose readability	S
50	developing ideas	I
51	thesis	Th
52	argumentation	L
53	clear thesis	Th

54	carrying out the purpose of an essay.	O
55	thesis	Th
56	evidence of critical thinking (the ability to reflect critically on text materials)	L
57	sentence structure	BM
58	thesis implications	L
59	ability to find, evaluate and use sources	RR, L
60	accuracy in selection of words and precise meanings	BM
61	analysis and synthesis	L
62	correct use of appropriate support	RR
63	correct use of punctuation, spelling and word choice	BM
64	grammar and punctuation usage	BM
65	close reading	L
66	deep thinking and logic	L
67	MLA documentation, in text and on the Works Cited page	RR
68	originality of thought	O
69	understanding and responding to complex ideas, materials, readings	L
70	engaging with sources	P
71	writing a thesis statement	Th
72	if research, understand how to apply MLA format according to guidelines	RR
73	evidence and examples that are relevant to the audience	S
74	evaluating the credibility of online sources	L
75	ability/willingness to understand and synthesize sources	RR
76	clearly stated thesis	Th
77	adequate essay development	C
78	clearly state a thesis	Th
79	thesis	Th
80	understanding of audience	S
81	depth of thought	L
82	solid academic tone	S
83	developing ideas	I
84	coherence	BM
85	basic grammar concepts	BM
86	researching and using resources effectively	RR
87	ability to revise and edit as appropriate for a better product	P
88	proofreading	P
89	verb usage	BM
90	following directions	O

91	topic choice	Th
92	application of reasoned critical thinking skills	L
93	MLA format.	RR
94	sentence skills - They don't have the mechanics they should have learned in sixth grade.	BM
95	correct use of citation form	RR
96	critical thinking	L
97	development of ideas	I
98	mechanics	BM
99	critical thinking	L
100	critical thinking	L
101	developing a thesis into a decent essay	C
102	developing two- and three-level outlines--students are not prepared to think analytically.	L, P
103	logical expression	L
104	transitions	C
105	thesis and unity	C, Th
106	English syntax - most of my students cannot write on a basic level	BM
107	critical thinking	L
108	citations	RR
109	sentence structure	BM
110	structure	C
111	research and documentation	RR
112	varying sentence structure while still conveying meaning.	S
113	ability to devise a thesis	Th
114	thesis writing	Th
115	correct use of complex and compound sentences (to avoid run-on and fragments)	BM
116	ability to use a variety of sentence structures	BM
117	correct Works Cited formatting	RR
118	critical thinking skills	L
119	use of outside sources	RR
120	ability to state a thesis	Th
121	effective development of paragraphs as case-building units	C
122	subordination	BM
123	grammar	BM
124	students have great difficulty focusing their writing	Th
125	ability to support a thesis statement with examples that effectively support the claim	L

126	organizing details and giving specific examples	C
127	full development (support and explanation) of ideas	L
128	differentiating between summary and analysis	L
129	correct use of MLA citation	RR
130	ability to use vocabulary effectively	BM
131	ability to organize thoughts and support	L
132	grammatical, punctuation, mechanical skills	BM
133	sentence fluency	BM
134	the ability to get words on a page, to plan, to create raw material in order to have something to work with, the ability to use writing as thinking not just the product of thought	P
135	essay organization	C
136	to stop using the second person "you" and the first person "I."	S
137	thesis construction	Th
138	thoughtful consideration of the task, including timeline and criteria for success	O
139	interesting, apt, varied vocabulary	S
140	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
141	correct use of citation form	RR
142	professional/academic tone	S
143	standard American English	BM
144	the ability to clearly tie cited evidence to the point at hand	L
145	correct use of citation forms	RR
146	understanding of formal register and academic tone.	S
147	sentence clarity and variety	BM, S
148	strong, specific thesis	Th
149	accurate documentation	RR
150	understanding and applying suitable evidence / research	L, RR
151	development of evidence	L
152	paragraph unity	BM
153	persuasive support	L
154	support	L
155	use of supporting material and/or sources to support a viewpoint	RR, L
156	citation	RR
157	revising	P
158	writing in the active voice and selecting synonyms instead of vague pronouns	S
159	correct level of formality for purpose	S
160	ability to organize a composition logically, while still	C

	maintaining a clear central thought	
161	correct use of sentence structures	BM
162	critical thinking	L
163	ability to differentiate between a paper's thesis and the topic in sample essays	L
164	quality of writing	I
165	using rhetorical strategies	S
166	textual analysis	L
167	ability to revise with the audience in mind	S
168	addressing opposing points of view	L
169	ability to examine a text and understand it's main techniques	L
170	correct use of citations	RR
171	mechanical skills	BM
172	standard, written English	BM
173	critical and Logical thinking	L
174	organization	C
175	careful editing/proofreading	BM, P
176	focus and organization	C
177	thesis statement	Th
178	utilizing correct documentation and formatting style.	RR
179	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
180	ability to research	RR
181	topic development	Th
182	ability to read college level texts	O
183	correct use of spelling, capitalization, SAE/grammar, syntax and complex sentence structure	BM
184	organization	C
185	logic	L
186	critical reading	L
187	mechanics	BM
188	finding credible sources--students believe that if it's online, it's credible.	RR
189	complex grammar	BM
190	thesis statements	Th
191	some students struggle with spelling and grammar	BM
192	research skills - evaluating good sources	RR
193	citation style/knowledge, though I tend to feel that this is more a result of results-driven laziness than true difficulty	RR
194	synthesis of sources	RR
195	appropriate word choice	S

196	grammar and punctuation	BM
197	paraphrasing	RR
198	original ideas	O
199	appropriate academic language and style	S
200	writing sentences and paragraphs with effective language and grammar	BM, S
201	inability to organize writing and link ideas .....(deficiencies tied to lack of audience awareness)	C, S
202	citation form	RR
203	supporting the thesis with paragraphs that feature strong, interpretive topic sentences	C
204	understanding argumentation	L
205	ability to write clear sentences	BM
206	ability to integrate sources and use citations	RR
207	to find the appropriate level of diction for academic essays.	S
208	paragraph development	C
209	unique and resounding student voice	S
210	understanding and effective use of drafting and revision process	P
211	the ability to select reputable sources	RR
212	critical interaction with arguments.	L
213	accurate diction	BM
214	organization	C
215	mature vocabulary	S
216	development	I
217	ability to introduce texts and to write to an outside audience	RR, S
218	thesis	Th
219	drafting	P
220	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
221	correct grammar	BM
222	ability to use an appropriate academic tone	S
223	ability to use the proper tone for the type of writing being done	S
224	citations	RR
225	paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting from an outside source	RR
226	fluency in phrasing	S
227	hard work	O
228	citations	RR
229	solid academic tone	S

230	smooth attribution and use of sources	RR
231	ability to thoroughly defend a thesis	L
232	organization	C
233	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
234	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
235	GUM (grammar, usage, mechanics)	BM
236	flow of essay	C
237	documenting source use--students do not appreciate the concerns related to plagiarism	RR
238	rhetorical strategies	S
239	ability to follow instructions	O
240	natural sentence structure	BM
241	using accurate, intelligible, and concise phrasing.	S
242	ability to compose a thesis statement	Th
243	to stop reacting emotionally to content and instead to always imply an awareness that the subject might reflect multiple reactions in other readers.	S
244	citation form	RR
245	adequate development	I
246	critical thinking and reading	L
247	use of SWE	BM
248	paragraph development	C
249	write clearly and concisely	S
250	clarity of argument	L
251	correct citation	RR
252	correct citation format	RR
253	phrasing	S
254	organization of paragraphs, sentences and overall essay structure	C
255	grammar	BM
256	integrating source information--students balk at anything beyond cut and paste.	RR
257	find appropriate research materials	RR
258	active reading	L
259	ability to develop an enriched conclusion	C
260	that smooth content transitions are achieved in 2-4 sentences.	C
261	conciseness and clarity	S
262	correct use of citation form	RR
263	correct MLA format :)	RR

264	integration of evidence or data	RR, L
265	proper use of research style	RR
266	grammar	BM
267	Proofreading and editing are difficult because students do not (have not) read much even if required to do so.	BM

**APPENDIX G: Question 4 Coded Responses – University**

Category	Code
Logic	L
Thesis formulation	Th
Composition	C
Basic mechanics	BM
Research and Reference	RR
Process	P
Style	S
Other	O
Indeterminate	I

Ref. #	Responses	Code
1	thesis	Th
2	ability to produce clear, grammatical sentences, avoiding predication, logic, and structure problems	BM
3	clearly state a thesis	Th
4	desire and ability to invest time in the writing process	O
5	balance of evidence and interpretation	C
6	effective use and correct citation of sources	RR
7	ability to integrate outside sources into an argument or explanation.	RR
8	structuring ideas	L
9	proper format - either MLA or APA	RR
10	clearly stating thesis	Th
11	ability to express ideas in syntactically correct Standard English	BM
12	show a clear understanding of audience/rhetorical situation	S
13	correct understanding and use of appropriate citation methods	RR
14	effectively understanding and responding to a given rhetorical situation	S
15	ability to read, understand, and synthesize research material	RR
16	the ability to understand plagiarism and correctly cite information	RR
17	clear organizational structure	C
18	integrating evidence into the essay	RR
19	clear thesis	Th
20	correct use of supporting material	RR
21	correct use of complex sentences	BM
22	Students are slow to provide proof with claims and instead rely	L

	on "trust me because I said it" proof.	
23	integration of academic discourse language	S
24	critical thinking	L
25	citation	RR
26	self-criticism	O
27	identification of audience and purpose	S
28	the art of seeing everything in play in academic composition	O
29	forming a clear, concise thesis statement	Th
30	grammar	BM
31	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
32	understanding different perspectives.	O
33	use of standard English	BM
34	thesis statement	Th
35	critical thinking	L
36	organization	C
37	ability to articulate ideas in a clear, concise manner	BM
38	adequately developing ideas	I
39	choosing a topic	Th
40	clearly state a thesis	Th
41	clarity	S
42	the discipline to start early and edit drafts	O
43	organizing the parts of the essay into a coherent whole	C
44	ability to link sections or paragraphs clearly to the focus or thesis	C
45	A CLEAR THESIS	Th
46	correct grammar	BM
47	supporting the topic with research	RR
48	clear and specific expression of ideas	S
49	development of original ideas and arguable claims	L, Th
50	working with source material to generate argument	L
51	content	I
52	grammar	BM
53	ability to find and weigh evidence	RR, L
54	understanding of rhetorical situation, purpose, audience and rhetorical appeals	S
55	strong thesis statements	Th
56	proper use of citations and references pages	RR
57	focus	I
58	mental flexibility	O
59	knowledge of composition topic	RR

60	a clear thesis	Th
61	use of argumentative and analytical thought	L
62	critical thinking	L
63	organization and structure	C
64	offer support for each claim	L
65	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
66	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
67	clearly stating a thesis	Th
68	nuanced thinking: students frequently present a limited point of view	L
69	citations	RR
70	ability to analyze and write into a new rhetorical situation; analyze the rhetorical, structural, and stylistic features of a genre; write effectively with sources, which includes being able to assess the credibility of a source; read deeply, effectively paraphrase and summarize, effectively select brief direct quotes, and effectively cite; develop an effective writing process, that allows a piece to develop over time, informed by reader feedback	RR, L, P, S
71	syntax	BM
72	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
73	citing and using research	RR
74	editing/proofreading	P
75	using more formal language without slang	S
76	ability to read and understand college-level texts	O
77	grammar skills are difficult because many students have not been encouraged to make a connection between grammar rules and writing essays	BM
78	clarity of expression	S
79	using sources correctly	RR
80	correct use of grammar—i.e., no passive or redundant construction	S
81	sentence structure issues (run-ons, fragments, etc.) have been a big problem	BM
82	It depends entirely on the student. Each student brings strengths and weaknesses.	I
83	to annotate, summarize, paraphrase and quote sources correctly	RR
84	ability to clearly state a thesis and organize ideas	L, Th
85	identifying and using the appropriate genre	S

86	the correct use of complex sentence structures and a variety of sentence structures	BM
87	careful critical thinking about an issue in order to develop an approach	L
88	reading for structure and style	O
89	thesis	Th
90	development	I
91	paraphrasing	RR
92	basic grammar	BM
93	using documentation styles adequately	RR
94	reading	O
95	issues at the sentence level: clarity, sentence logic, grammar/usage/mechanics	BM
96	ability to develop a thesis, clearly articulate a thesis, structure an argument through topic sentences that relate to the thesis, quote integration from primary and secondary sources, move beyond simple edits of a draft to taking it through a development process, correct one's grammar: especially sentence structure, subject/verb agreement and pronoun/antecedents	RR, C, P, Th
97	coherence (shifts from third to second to first person)	BM
98	organization of ideas	C
99	coherent sentences and paragraphs	BM
100	correct use of punctuation marks	BM
101	the capacity to find the structure of their own ideas	L
102	ability to organize main ideas	L
103	ability to critically analyze texts and respond to them	L
104	thesis	Th
105	conciseness	S
106	synthesis of ideas	L
107	correct use of citation form	RR
108	concise strong evidence	L
109	ability to avoid plagiarism if outside sources are used, including citing sources accurately and clearly	RR
110	awareness of and ability to work with HOCs / "the big picture" and LOCs / "the close-up picture" (Please note: Different students have different problems with different aspects of these two "dimensions" of writing. A key strategy for the teacher is to help each individual student learn ways to "step back and look at" a writing assignment or a draft and to self-	P, BM

	identify some of the main issues or problems that need attention.)	
111	clear "so what?"	L
112	ability to analyze multiple sides of an issue.	L
113	abide by conventions	I
114	research skills	RR
115	using logic and reasoning to make their argument	L
116	ability to develop ideas	I
117	usefully and constructively integrate secondary research	RR
118	clear paragraph organization	C
119	constructing well-supported, well-reasoned arguments	L
120	ability to use precise words and pronouns with specific referents	BM
121	analytical thinking	L
122	clear thesis	Th
123	creating a sense of flow within the essay	C
124	a balanced argument	L
125	correct use of citation form	RR
126	Students find stasis hard to grasp especially when it concerns the issue.	I
127	analysis of evidence	L
128	construction of a strong thesis	Th
129	mastering a thorough and consistent revision process	P
130	expressing ideas clearly	S
131	organization	C
132	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th
133	evaluating and employing evidence	L
134	original thinking	O
135	topic sentences	BM
136	close reading	L
137	ability to support thesis with germane examples and explanations	L
138	coherent organization	C
139	narrowing a topic	Th
140	adequately develop theme	C
141	correct grammar and usage	BM
142	the student's commitment to saying something that is important to the student	O
143	using specific language...	S
144	ability to write varied sentences with a sense of rhythm	S

145	CORRECT USE OF CITATION FORM	RR
146	organization	C
147	correctly citing the sources both in-text and on a reference page	RR
148	having a critical stance	L
149	clarity of thought	L
150	clearly state a thesis	Th
151	ability to critically interrogate a topic rather than jumping to conclusions	L
152	good use of evidentiary support	L
153	clear and relevant topic sentences (tied to controlling idea)	C
154	in-text citation	RR
155	stick-to-it-ive-ness	O
156	interest in composition topic	O
157	organization of thesis, evidence from author	RR, L, Th
158	formulating a thesis	Th
159	thoughtful writing	I
160	write free of grammatical and syntax errors	BM
161	correct use of complex sentence structure	BM
162	ability to draft appropriate topic sentences in support of a thesis	C
163	correct use of citation	RR
164	Being well-informed: when working with challenging readings, students frequently go with the first obvious point the author makes and assume that it is the limit of the argument.	L
165	following assignment	O
166	writing clearly	S
167	naming main points	P
168	strong analysis (explain and make use of complex evidence)	L
169	understanding the role of reader and writer in academic English writing	S
170	correctly citing sources	RR
171	ability to clearly state thesis statement	Th
172	have a clear, specific thesis	Th
173	to organize arguments and information logically	L
174	ability to develop ideas	I
175	appropriate style--students tend to be rather mechanical	S
176	the ability to read and research in order to build a case or make an argument.	RR, L
177	synthesis	L
178	appropriate word choice	S

179	targeting adequately a text to a specific audience	S
180	developing paragraphs depending on notion	P
181	correct Works Cited page and in-text citations	RR
182	proper grammar and diction	BM
183	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
184	critical thinking	L
185	organization of thoughts and arguments in an effective manner	L
186	distinction between own voice and voices of cited authors	RR
187	a distinct voice (appropriate to academic papers)	S
188	organization	C
189	ability to develop and explain ideas clearly and in depth, anticipating reader questions or confusions	C
190	thesis statement that is both clear and complex	Th
191	synthesize information	L
192	making major revisions and editing to improve the paper before it is complete.	P
193	ability to clearly state central and supporting ideas	C, Th
194	develop cogent, analytical paragraphs	C, L
195	clarification of ideas	L
196	adapting tone and style to a given situation and audience	S
197	ability to focus on a task long enough to understand it and think it through	O
198	correct use of grammar	BM
199	Students tend toward lists as they build evidence instead of relationships that make one idea necessary before adding the next.	L
200	effective incorporation of source materials while maintaining the writer's voice	RR, S
201	being able to self-edit and see mistakes when they are happening, not after they have occurred	BM
202	writing cohesively	C
203	correct use of citation form	RR
204	error free writing	BM
205	transitions	C
206	writing a clear controlling idea	Th
207	ability to state clear thesis	Th
208	reading research	RR
209	concrete details and examples	S
210	the discernment to choose topics that foster interesting thought at the appropriate level of detail for the student and	Th

	the assignment	
211	using strategies to develop ideas or a focus for the composition	P
212	ability to follow standard rules of grammar and punctuation	BM
213	GOOD INCORPORATION OF SOURCES	RR
214	focus	I
215	topic sentences	BM
216	ability to engage with the opposition thoughtfully	L
217	natural integration of quotes	RR
218	clear thesis statement	Th
219	clarity of expression	S
220	logical reasoning	L
221	goal of writing to a specific audience	S
222	research	RR
223	correct use of citation form	RR
224	selecting, analyzing, and discussing sources	RR, L
225	Introducing sources: students forget that most audience members won't know why a given source is relevant	RR
226	revision	P
227	supporting points with specific evidence	L
228	persistence and engagement	O
229	cohesion	C
230	to locate and evaluate print and online sources	RR
231	correct use of English grammar and complex sentence structures	BM
232	paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, documenting	RR
233	the ability to remember that they have learned various moves in order to use them again	O
234	synthesis	L
235	clear grammatical structures	BM
236	for some, constructing grammatically correct sentences	BM
237	correct use of MLA format	RR
238	correct use of citation form	RR
239	ability to write effective transitions	C
240	time management	O
241	ability to avoid grammar errors, including spelling, word form, and agreement problems	BM
242	correct citation	RR
243	construct an effective thesis	Th
244	providing appropriate and valid support for thesis	RR, L
245	ability to organize	C

246	ability to paraphrase	RR
247	Cohesion takes time to build because students have been taught not to repeat words. Good cohesion can benefit from repetition.	O
248	sentence variety	S
249	correct use of grammar	BM
250	transitions between ideas	C
251	citing sources	RR
252	an ear for academic English	S
253	citation	RR
254	careful organization of ideas	C
255	punctuation that aides readability	BM
256	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
257	punctuation	BM
258	audience awareness	S
259	correct use of complex sentence structures	BM
260	correct use of transitions throughout writing	C
261	constructing readable sentences	BM
262	Clarity and concision: students struggle to think about how they might say something more clearly.	S
263	logical supporting structure	L
264	identifying evidence and/or relevant information	L
265	the ability to carefully set up the context for another person's ideas when it is necessary to quote, summarize or paraphrase	RR
266	accurate summary	RR
267	research exercise since most have never done research papers before	RR
268	ability to smoothly merge source material with original thought	RR
269	develop a consistent and original voice	S
270	ability to produce clear, grammatical sentences, avoiding predication, logic, and structure problems	BM
271	correct formatting (MLA)	RR
272	use different writing techniques	P
273	correctly using complex sentence structures	BM
274	ability to proofread	BM
275	MLA	RR
276	overall organization	C
277	a general knowledge of English mechanics	BM
278	academic writing style	S
279	clear syntax	BM

280	ability to understand and participate in critical conversations	L
281	strong work ethic	O
282	correct register for vocabulary (academic versus colloquial/formal)	S
283	grammar / mechanics / usage	BM
284	correct use of grammatical structures such as punctuation and verb tense	BM
285	transitions between sentences and paragraphs	C
286	Writing for a reader: perhaps because of their experience in high school and standardized tests, students forget that the people reading their essays want to be engaged and maybe entertained.	S
287	writing thesis statements, topic sentences, intros and concls	C
288	creativity	O
289	transitions/segues from paragraph to paragraph	C
290	ability to provide specific concrete details and imagery	S
291	ability to clearly state a thesis	Th

**APPENDIX H: Question 6 Coded Responses**

A	Redirect focus of instruction
B	Standardize grading practices/clearly define course criteria
C	Improve qualifications of instructors
D	Provide a longer writing sequence
E	Require placement exams/provide remedial classes
F	Other
G	Place greater emphasis on basic mechanics/comp structure
H	Reduce class size
I	Change amount of writing/revision
J	Include current technology
K	Emphasize critical thinking

Ref. #	Code	Comment
1	A, D, I	More time spent on writing/revising Writing across the curriculum More writing intensive courses required individual writing conferences
2	C, D	If I had my way, I would try to make sure that all instructors were well qualified themselves in teaching these skills to their students. We have to hire so many part-timers that experience and expertise varies widely. I would also love to see a 2-semester freshman composition sequence so that students get more feedback and experience themselves, and I would make sure every student is required to take research writing. At my school, business majors take a different follow-up course in business and professional writing, but research writing is not emphasized as much in that course.
3	N/A	The academic reading & writing program is excellent, & I am very happy with how this program is run. There are plenty of teaching resources and plenty of extra assistance for any student that

		wants more help.
4	A	I would consider allowing occasional use of student-generated topics and would lean less heavily on the personal essay.
5	A, B, C	<p>We currently have, in my opinion, an excellent Director of Composition. [IDENTIFIER DELETED]. I think she has not used an English handbook much herself, and she does not use one (as far as I know) with her students or with the TAs (teaching assistants) whom she trains. Use of a handbook in composition courses is "optional," according to her. For my own teaching (and for my philosophy of teaching), student access to a handbook is essential. (FYI, I use Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommer's RULES FOR WRITING.) The handbook is not the focus of the course, at all. But it is a valuable resource (and I am pleased that most of my students end up viewing it that way.) I want students to have the ability to USE a handbook (hard copy or e-book) and to appreciate the many dimensions, purposes, and possible benefits of a handbook. I feel that a handbook for English is as important for a writer as a dictionary and a thesaurus (print or electronic). I also feel it would be good to have a more concrete list of expected outcomes (concepts AND skills, not just concepts) for freshman composition and for sophomore composition. Currently there is not much "oversight" or "quality control" for our university's two required composition courses, I think. (This is a long-standing problem at our university and not the fault of the current Director of Comp. She simply inherited the problem.) The composition courses are taught by a mixture of TAs, Lecturers, and a few (very few) full-time faculty. In Fall 2012, for example, twenty-three sections of freshman composition were offered (enrollment is typically 25 students per section; 25 is the maximum allowed). I appreciate the freedom that each instructor is allowed in teaching the course. However, my sense is that, overall, this freedom is not paying off for the students.</p>
6	A	I think that I would use a different text book for Freshman Composition. As a whole our department uses "Writing Analytically" by Rosenwasser and Stephens and my students find it incredibly difficult to understand. However, I think that our

		focus on analytical writing is an important one for the whole semester because it seems as though it takes them the whole semester to really get the skills down.
7	A	Prioritize the direct connection and communication of beginning composition skills, assignments, topics, and rhetorical modes to students' ability to think, create, communicate, and therefore succeed in college, in their professional goals, and in life. Illuminate the relevance of students' writing!
8	A	Perhaps a committee (oh yeah, another committee!) comprised of members across several disciplines asking them for the standards and practices for writing in their disciplines. One paper in the Research Paper Writing Class could focus on individual students and writing within their majors.
9	A, C, D	- Propose new books (texts) for composition classes - Give enough time to composition classes - Recruit well-trained and dedicated instructors.
10	C	I would work to improve communication among the faculty who teach these classes and attempt to provide resources for adjunct faculty. This program is already in place at my university, but it could use some new energy.
11	A	Change texts, perhaps move toward a more experimental, composition-centered course instead of a rhetorical mode-centered course.
12	A	I would encourage students to raise genre awareness about different texts while engaging them in reading different texts in an extensive and analytic way.
13	N/A	In my department, the professors who teach composition courses continually collaborate to review assessment data to improve student outcomes. For example, we know students have a serious problem in the skills identified in #4. As a result, more time is being spent on explicitly teaching research and documentation skills. Another change that will be implemented is relying less on adjuncts to teach even the basic courses.

14	N/A	Our institution works hard to norm the outcomes for classes. I think having standard outcomes for each writing course keeps instructors focused on the (collective) needs of students. We change the outcomes as the academic need for students changes (ie. over the 12 years I have been teaching, we have raised standards, particularly in critical reading and research requirements).
15	J	I would ensure that all classes meet in computer-equipped classrooms.
16	D, K	<p>The problem starts in high school. If the high school teachers had the students do more critical reading and writing, they would be better prepared for college. As is it, we are playing catch-up. Even if students take developmental reading and writing courses before the college level courses, they are still behind in critical thinking. Of course, there are always students who excel and are motivated, but what I am seeing are motivated students who lack basic skills. Two semesters is not enough to correct years of poor instruction. I know this sounds as though I am slamming the high school teachers, but I started off as a high school teacher and I know what needs to be done. I do not believe it is being done now.</p> <p>Truly, I think we are doing everything we can at this level. It just is not enough. As I said, the biggest problem is critical thinking skills. You cannot change this overnight.</p>
17	A, H	Ideally, class sizes would be smaller to give more time for individual feedback. I would also give teachers a chance to make their own readers, which would hopefully include a lot of sample student essays. I think they could use more good examples of student writing. I would also emphasize the writing process more (generating ideas, developing a thesis, outlining, etc.)
18	B	I would require higher standards for completion from all instructors.
19	H	Keep class size low so as a teacher I can devote more time to individual instruction through tutoring and conferencing about their written work. As a department we work very hard to help

		<p>the students who need extra help. We have an Academic Success Center with a writing tutor available to give one-on-one assistance, and all of us encourage students to come for additional tutoring during our office hours. We are also dedicated to providing our students with an understanding of grammar and usage skill. We want to have a fighting chance of explaining why a sentence is correct or incorrect. This is an idealistic goal, but we keep holding on to it. Some students make great gains in their understanding of grammar and usage while others demonstrate very little improvement.</p>
20	E, K	<p>All students would be required to take a Freshman Seminar to prepare them for the rigors of college. Critical thinking would be a component of this. All students would be screened /tested and based on scores would be required to complete some sort of developmental or remedial course to improve basic writing skills.</p>
21	A, D	<p>Students enter and matriculate college with gaps in skills and complex commitments to work, life and family. They progress toward a degree using an erratic sequencing of coursework, especially in community college. The traditional concept of a discrete, first year composition sequence does not effectively address the complex rhythms of course-taking which our students experience. They need highly strategic English composition support throughout their programs.</p> <p>Therefore, the change I would advocate is for a more versatile, consistent and subject-sensitive version of English composition support. I would provide writing lab workshop courses for all students taking writing intensive courses. A writing lab approach could provide one, two or three credit workshops that address diverse learning objectives drawn from needs of students and/or faculty in multiple disciplines.</p>
22	E	<p>pass a grammar course with 100 %. before entering a composition class.</p>
23	B	<p>I would try to gain support for the writing program by reaching out across the faculty to teachers in other disciplines. After consulting with them, I would try to identify the overall objectives of writing instruction at our college....and create a</p>

		writing skills and objectives handbook for the faculty at large to use.
24	N/A	I don't think I would make any. My college's program is very rigorous.
25	A, D	Have a two year four semester sequence of mandatory writing classes as GE requirements. The first year should be dedicated to the writing process, grammar, sentence structure and introduction to research methods, or literature reviews. The second mandatory year should be dedicated to writing across the curriculum (writing for the sciences, humanities, social sciences and business).
26	I	I would require more drafts of fewer papers. Currently we require five essays per semester, and completing that many essays seems to skim the surface of skills and genre-specific features. Focusing on the writing process with multiple drafts of one paper would help us to delve more deeply into and produce more quality writing.
27	A	Less textbook reliance, more creativity in lesson planning
28	G	To teach how grammar works and how to use it.
29	A, J	Writing lab for all students, not just for students who need added help. Instructors would use more interactive skills with students and branch out to allow students to create work in social media, art work formats, PowerPoint , etc. Yes, students need to learn to write, but they need to be interested, engaged, and want to learn. You cannot force feed them anything that they don't want to do. If they were excited to show what they can do in other mediums, maybe they would be encouraged to write more.
30	A	The current course sequence used by TA's and most full-time faculty (I'm new to the department and have been given total freedom in the curriculum in my own classes so long as the programmatic goals are upheld) is a couple of decades out of date. They produce a series of individual papers on different topics, providing little transfer and no sense of progression

		throughout the semester. Were I in charge, I would encourage every teacher to theme their course on a topic of interest for them. I would also encourage them to focus more on generalizable rhetorical skills rather than on teaching specific genres of papers. For example, rather than teaching to an "argument paper," I would prefer that students learn about rhetorical situations and audiences, skills that can help them write a traditional argument paper, yes, but that can also help them design a web site, create a visual presentation, write a speech, or interview for a job.
31	G, I	I would reduce the quantity of required writing during the first semester to devote more time to language skills and paragraph development.
32	A	I would stress imitation as a viable option for understanding the function of methods of composition. Students should have the opportunity to use the method of process analysis, for instance, as well as analyze it in the context of a professional essay that features this strategy.
33	B	I would check syllabuses to make sure all faculty are trying to meet the common learning outcomes. I would arrange more (we have at least one a year) workshops on grading to increase our level of consistency. Students know who the easy graders are. I would arrange a workshop on MLA formatting and documentation style to ensure that we are all telling students the same things.
34	A, H	Individual attention is key to student improvement so I would recommend lowering student class sizes and required individual conferences throughout the semester. I would also seek better ways to integrate the writing lab / writing tutors into the classroom experience. I would also seek to place students in composition classes in cohorts based on their major / other interests. Composition instructors could then more specifically develop the skills that the students will need in their later classes and career.
35	A	I would use non-fiction works rather than a series of essays for

		the first composition class in order to give a more solid foundation in focusing on and analyzing longer texts.
36	G	I would put more emphasis on learning to read, analysis, and organization skills. I would also do more intensive study of writing a sentence.
37	H	Only fifteen students or fewer in each composition class
38	A	The main thing I would change is the injunction against teaching literature in the course. I feel by being able to make use of the discipline I have been trained in I can better demonstrate to students what they need to get from my class.
39	D, E	I would first make the lower-level composition class mandatory for all students whose placement test scores show a need for any level of developmental writing coursework. The reason for this is because most students who are placed into the higher level developmental writing course still demonstrate a lack of understanding for many of the concepts taught in the lower-level course. The next thing I would do is make the contact time longer for these classes. Three hours a week for 16 weeks is not enough time to give these students the skills necessary for college success. The last thing I would do is mandate that second-language learners take a class with additional supports to help them with basic sentence writing skills in the English language. Because many of these students are translating from their native tongue, they write sentences based on the structure of their native language, which often is in direct contrast to how English sentences are constructed.
40	I	I would focus less on portfolios and in-class writing and more on revision and polishing.
41	D	I would make English 101 a two-semester endeavor, with each class counting for four-credits
42	B, G	The outcomes must be consistent, regardless of the instructor. The students need a more rigorous academic environment with a structured, logical curriculum. If students cannot master the basics of sentence structure, paragraph structure, and essay

		organization, understanding various rhetorical forms is useless.
43	N/A	We don't have a composition requirement, so therefore there's nothing to change
44	A, K	I would completely eliminate journal style and reactionary, self-involved approach to text. Instead, I would teach Critical Analysis skills. There is a book (now out of print) Writing is an Unnatural Act by Raymond which puts it together very economically and without unnecessary fluff. Looking at texts for writing methods teaches students to move beyond what they like or dislike, what directly applies to only their own lives and experiences. Instead, they learn to understand WHY we make them take these classes that have no direct application or even need for their majors. I strongly believe that it is my responsibility to see the people they can become even though their life experiences does not allow them to visualize this future for themselves. Education is what we are left with when we forget every fact we have ever been taught. This philosophy is one I voice in classes and it motivates the students because the work to achieve this privilege is substantial. I would require: Five 1 - 1 1/2 page Critical Responses without 1st (or 2nd) person use. Two 6-8 paragraph full Critical Analysis Papers (the second one analyzing an essay with a controversial topic such as abortion or executions--education should lead to uncertainty. In my experience, certainty seems to be almost always a result of ignorance. People who read and listen tend to allow others their own perspectives. A Research Paper (for obvious reasons and to experience the importance of thesis and topic sentences as well as content transitions.
45	N/A	They are well prepared but can seem somewhat prepared. I believe that disconnect occurs for two reasons. First, these new skills have to be reinforced. When even a semester goes by with less writing, students forget some of these fragile skills. When their next writing assignments are part of classes that focus on other areas of study, professors are under equipped to help students reach their previous level of competence. Because writing is not the disciplinary area for these professors, their assignment sheets also do not reinforce the important lessons

		learned in composition classes. For example, the students see that they are expected to include their "opinions." In my class, opinion is mere opinion. In fact, what these instructors really want are measured arguments that include claim, proof, evidence, and explanation. But the student sees the word opinion, and I would argue, assumes that "trust me" proof is again relevant.
46	B	In our situation, we have many, many part-time faculty and relatively few full-time. I would like to see many more calibration sessions in which full-time and part-time faculty would sit down together and honestly evaluate how student work were scored.
47	N/A	Not much. The First-Year Writing program here is well thought out with a final portfolio with common assessment and goals in every section of Freshman English.
48	B, F	Change 1: All composition sections' instructors would participate in norming sessions to develop common expectations for "successful" student writing. Change 2: A common final for all Level 1 composition students would be adopted to evaluate students' level of success in meeting course objectives; discussion among faculty growing out of evaluation of these finals would inform revisions to methods and materials. Change 3: Some means would be devised to track students' success in subsequent coursework to evaluate effectiveness of composition program at preparing students for success in content area courses and at receiving institutions. Change 4: I would wave a magic wand and *zap* ASSESSMENT would be viewed as an opportunity to learn rather than a threat to academic freedom.
49	A, F, J	I would make the computers labs accessible to students at least one class each week, taking the emphasis off lecture and more onto the writing process. I would put in place an assessment that ensures students have a particular skills set before enrollment. I would establish a pool of model papers at each grade level to help students understand the distinctions among average, good, and exceptional writing.
50	A, B, C	Redevelop the Composition I course so that it is more of an

		academic writing course. The course we offer now is more of a psychology course that focuses on the student's "self development" through writing rather than learning the tools of academic writing. I would also institute in-class observation of the adjunct instructors. Finally I would monitor the grades for every Composition I course since grade inflation is a problem at my school.
51	E	Gearing more students toward a developmental course before starting the regular 101-102 sequence. Hire a Rhet/Comp expert to guide the faculty teaching those courses.
52	B	I work with instructors to see that certain basics are covered consistently and thoroughly while still allowing them flexibility in how they teach and what they require.
53	B	A final exit essay based on a reading list--not the optional inane topics most systems require
54	C	More one-on-one guidance and professional development opportunities for incoming lecturers and new faculty
55	B	A Generally followed Guidelines of Composition document.
56	G	Improved understanding of and facility with grammar would be required to ensure that students know how the English language works; unfortunately, most don't know. Improved reading comprehension -- most students don't read effectively.
57	I	More practice I would require revision of every paper.
58	B	I'd mandate the use of websites like 'turnitin.com' to prevent plagiarism
59	A	Tough question - I believe I would support more English Composition curriculum that promotes reading, writing and speaking well (and listening well) for students as an entire package. These are all strongly interconnected and imperative to the skill building of strong communicators.
60	G, I	Spend more time on the basics. Worry less about the variety about writing assignments. Revise more, compose less.

61	N/A	I am pretty much in charge of my own classes. I teach only the second semester of freshman composition. Our greatest issue is that most of our students are not ready for college English. Most do not pass this class. I average about a 30% pass rate. There is a great deal of help available and offered free to the students via an academic support lab and a writing center. They just won't take advantage of it.
62	H, I	Smaller class size so that more regular writing could receive more regular feedback.
63	B, C	I would have regular workshops for all English faculty to create common expectations and share ideas for meeting them. I would encourage faculty to toughen standards. I believe that many students do not believe that they do not read, think, and write well. After all, they've been speaking the language since babyhood and are getting by just fine. I feel a sense of their "just waiting out" the semester without any intention of learning or changing. A higher percent of required repeats might send the message. I add that I am as guilty of letting them slide by as anyone else. I just get worn down by the end of the semester and give up. Yes, they write well enough to function, but they have no real interest in writing really well.
64	A, E	I would increase focus on the development of rhetorical skills through frequent and critical in-class writing workshops. Each workshop would focus on a different rhetorical or mechanical skill, and each formal paper to be completed outside class would exercise and assess the interaction of these skills. I would reevaluate the use of placement testing to more accurately recognize students who need developmental instruction. I would coordinate instruction among composition classes, and also between the English department and the most common majors at my institution. This would better prepare students to research and write papers in upper division courses in their majors. These are, of course, pipe dreams, and assume the absence of intra- and inter-departmental politics as well as budgetary constraints.
65	A	I would get rid of all of the focus on grammar in the preparation

		courses and focus on writing skills instead.
66	B, E	Require international students to complete ESL courses and pass a proficiency test; initiate exit exams for all students for each composition level
67	G	Mandatory emphasis (all instructors) on basic writing and grammar skills in the ENGL 101 classroom.
68	D	I would develop a supplemental instruction program, perhaps mandatory work at the writing center, for example, to intensify the instruction students receive. A single year of composition isn't enough to prepare students who are coming in under prepared for college-level writing.
69	B	I would implement an exit exam
70	A, K	I would increase focus on voice development in academic writing. I would also underscore critical thinking skills in the production of academic writing.
71	F	I would require the use of APA to prepare students for technical classes and future careers.
72	C	professional development opportunities for full and part-time faculty to develop teaching skills--increase awareness of outcomes and accountability for outcomes--and facilitate communication
73	G, K	* Emphasize argumentation, including evaluating types of logic and logical fallacies * Stress sentence structure, form, and variety * Vocabulary building * Evaluation of sources and evidence
74	A, B	Better selection of textbooks, regular norming sessions to ensure all faculty understand grading expectations, clear philosophical emphasis on purpose of composition courses.
75	C	Overall, I'm very pleased with our program. I would however recommend more training for TAs and faculty.
76	E	I would require more remedial classes before a student enters an introductory college level composition class.

77	H	Our current course cap for each composition class is 22 students. The first thing I would change is reducing the class size to 15 students or less. Smaller class sizes would allow more individualized attention and help instructors to concentrate on each student's abilities and weaknesses.
78	D	Require students to take a year-long course instead of one that lasts only a semester.
79	E	Implement rigid testing for placement
80	A, B	1. reduce the amount of time in class on peer review. by the college level, students should be able to use their own critical skills at revising. 2. have a standardized exit essay after the completion of the second semester of freshman composition. it would be cross-graded. 3. enforced standard requirements for essays per writing class; not classifying a response to a reading as a writing assignment.
81	A	Teach personal essay.
82	B, C, K	We do a good job overall in preparing our students. Composition instructors don't have a magic wand. These students need practice in critical thinking and in composition, and it is naive to think that every student who passes the Composition I / II sequence will be prepared for upper division work; however, many of them are (a strong majority, I would say), despite the often-cited disadvantages faced by the under-prepared student. I support the concept of academic freedom and composition/literature teachers being able to teach to their strengths. I do not support a uniform curriculum; course assessment, however, is a necessary burden. Were I in charge, I would make the composition assessment process easier. At this college, we take a good deal of time reading essays (blind submissions) in a sort of holistic assessment. I believe one can find easier ways to achieve the same goals. Teachers need to focus on teaching and improving teaching. Assessment is part of the process, but when assessment detracts focus and time from the curriculum and the classroom experience, it becomes counter-productive. I don't mean to say that at my college we

		<p>assess to the detriment of a quality classroom experience. Assessment gone bad is a nationwide threat, in my view. All colleges who rely on part-time faculty are likely to need better supervision, especially in the field of composition. Experienced full-time faculty are the only ones capable of overseeing part-time faculty. At our college, we teach a 5/5 course load (five classes in fall, five in spring) so it's unrealistic to expect tenured faculty to take a big role in supervising part-timers, although we try. If I ran things, I would provide full-time faculty a course release per semester to oversee part-time faculty. As long as we're looking at the bottom line of dollars instead of a quality education, we will not be able to effect such changes. Education is an investment, not a revenue stream. People (even educators) find this idea difficult to process in today's national climate of declining state support for public education. Those who will destroy education in this country in the long run will do so through best intentions, e.g. using budgetary mechanisms to transform colleges and universities into job-producing, vo-tech style institutions.</p>
83	N/A	None at present
84	D	I would add one additional writing course that focused on research skills and writing.
85	A	More focus on "real" writing scenarios. Not all students intend to continue with academic research.
86	N/A	I'm not sure I know enough about teaching English Composition to answer that question yet. The best thing I know to do is to continue to improve as a teacher in whatever ways I can.
87	E	More stringent placement requirements
88	C, D	Increase communication and collaboration among faculty Have English Composition be a year-long, two semester course
89	A	Mainly, I would encourage instructors to depart from textbooks and to support students in writing challenging essays about topics coming not from textbooks, but from the students themselves. I would encourage some common reading and

		experience among students in the same writing class, but also would place more emphasis on the student-generated writing and on the writing process.
90	C, F	I wouldn't let adjuncts teach it. I would do a longitudinal study to test whether or not it actually prepared students for college writing. I'd use the results of that study to change the way the class is taught. I'd try to get professors at my institution to value good writing. I'd try to get administrators and other faculty to understand what an incredibly labor-intensive class comp is.
91	F	I would make all students take English composition and research and writing before advancing beyond the freshman year.
92	A	If the time allows, students will be asked to work MORE on sample essays as a class project. By working on other students' samples, student will get acquainted with the "common" mistakes that other students make and thus will be able to avoid them in their own writing. One more point is that students will work more on their sources in-class.
93	A, B	I would require a library component taught by librarians. I would ask that everyone is responsible for teaching the research paper. I would like it if we were all required to meet certain requirements but be able to decide how to meet those on our own.
94	B	I would institute standards for number of analytical papers produced in each class as well as a list of grammar and/or style topics to be covered.
95	G	Stress the importance of research and how it helps strengthen the argument or position. Teach students to embed research into their writing without plagiarizing.
96	N/A	None
97	E, G	I would possibly add another section on grammar before writing becomes the focus. At my college, there is a section before the basic college composition class, but it is still focused on writing. I feel like students coming from high school haven't really honed these skills yet and that they need to be focused on and figured

		out before a student can even consider writing any length of an assignment.
98	A	There is some overlap in the stated learning outcomes for 101 and 102. I would consider removing research related writing outcomes from the 101 course and focusing on these outcomes exclusively in the 102 course.
99	J	I would include more focus on information literacy. I would introduce assignments that require multi - modal responses, for example, using video or audio components to an electronic text.
100	C	Within the broad expectations of learning outcomes in freshman composition, I believe great teachers should teach from their passions, so I wouldn't make any curricular or pedagogically impositions. I do think our program would be improved by eliminating or greatly reducing our dependence on adjunct instructors.
101	A, C	As a traditionalist who believes that becoming a better writer means becoming a better reader and by writing a lot, I'd halt some of the high tech, power point mumbo jumbo that some of my younger colleagues seem to believe is the best route to better writing. I'd select one good reader with a lot of sample essays and keep the Norton Field Guide we've been using and scrap the rest of the supplementary materials students are required to buy at my school. I'd also make sure that all of the new hires had real English degrees which required a thesis of some length to be attained so as to minimize the sometimes pernicious influence (with all of their theoretical silliness and talk of learning communities and writing across the curriculum) of those with English Education or Rhet-Comp degrees or backgrounds in "communications."
102	B, G	I would streamline all intro courses. Right now, we have CCGs which only speak to the core outcomes for the class-- ideologically. However, every instructor is still given freedom to loosely interpret the guidelines and create classes which produce different levels of expectation. In my opinion, I expect a greater degree of proficiency with the above-mentioned skills than some

		<p>of my colleagues. Thus, students do not have a firm grasp of what other professors in higher-level courses will expect. Therefore, again, I would enforce a policy which strongly urges faculty to teach on thesis statements, topic sentences, basic grammar, and citation formats. It is incredibly difficult to teach intro composition because I cannot, in such a short time, ascertain the varying degrees of competency with regard to all my students. I do not understand the infrastructure of the high schools from which they are coming. Thus, some students have, literally, no experience writing essays and yet others are natural Type-A overachievers and push themselves to create excellence at every turn. Being able to teach them all effectively is intensely difficult. Streamline, streamline, streamline.</p>
103	F	<p>Require attendance Improve quality of advising Increase support services for students Make sure they can buy their textbooks</p>
104	C, E	<p>I would stop relying on adjuncts. I would require a standardized skills test at the beginning of the semester so that remedial students can be identified and placed in remediation classes. Over all, I think our program is pretty good.</p>
105	A	<p>More focus on reading and writing from texts.</p>
106	A	<p>I'd want to cover other types of writing rather than just essay-writing. I think analytical essays are an important but narrow focus.</p>
107	A, D, E, H, I	<p>In developmental English, I would focus less on producing 4-5 essays and focus more on reading skills. This would include writing about reading, but the writing would be more informal. Perhaps two courses for developmental students would be better: one focused more on reading and one focused more on writing. Students might test into one or the other depending on their needs. In all composition courses, less focus on producing 4-5 essays with specific prompts (created by the department) would allow for differentiation. Students might choose the type of writing they do, such as writing that is used in the discipline of their major. Placement of students in courses would be</p>

		determined by writing samples. Caps for writing courses would be smaller (10 for developmental and 15 for college-level composition). Reading and writing might be taught best in conjunction with a course for another discipline. Students would learn the content in biology, for example, the reading teacher would work with them on reading to learn and researching, and the composition teacher would work with them on demonstrating learning through writing. Writing, then, would be a part of every course yet would be supported by reading and writing teachers.
108	F, H	Smaller classes! It's impossible to give high-quality feedback on each paper when there's eighty or so at a time, and the short quarter timeline means the turnaround needs to be pretty quick. Having fewer student would benefit everyone. More support for students -- financially and academically. When students are working full-time job and going to school full time, it's impossible for them to spend the time on school that they need. More tutoring availability would be good, too.
109	N/A	We currently use ACT scores and/or COMPASS test scores to place students in English 101. This has been a helpful thing for both students and teachers!
110	A	I would change the current text from a theme-based text to a genre-based text.
111	A	vary the papers each semester. do more with narratives and poetry. lesson the value of voice in regards to writing SWE
112	C	I would work to create a sense of responsibility to students among teaching assistants. TA's at my institution are all too ready to believe that our freshmen are dumb, disinterested, and not worth excessive energy and attention. As a result, many composition classes are dumb, uninteresting, and not worth excessive energy and attention! I strongly believe that universities should encourage their temporary staff to respect the students they teach, via open dialogue about the "average" student's profile, consistent discussion about successful coursework strategies, and efforts to create and maintain a

		positive teaching culture.
113	F	I'd require a 3-credit course in College Success to get students motivated towards succeeding in all of their classes. Students who work hard succeed in English composition classes. Students who are not motivated do not succeed.
114	B	I'd like to ensure that we are addressing what we collectively believe to be the skills that will allow our students to master the outcomes. Then I'd want to make sure we are on the same page in terms of providing the best class activities and assignments for them master the skills.
115	B, C	1. Only allow professors to teach those classes that really want to do those writing sequences. 2. Rubrics are required for grading. 3. Once every two years, composition instructors must spend an hour with peers using rubrics and grade three essays with a minimum of three readers for each essay. Discussion and feedback must ensue the grading. 4. File text justification document including rationale for use.
116	J	I think that more focus on information literacy and evaluation of online sources would enable students to adapt more easily to the rigors of other college courses.
117	E	Our university currently has neither ESL or remedial writing courses, nor do we have a writing center. Given the average level of preparation that our students have (which is low), given the increasing number of transfer/non-traditional students at our institution (about 60% of our enrollment), and given the increasing number of international/ESL students at our institution, implementing those three additions would be very helpful.
118	C	Workshops for the TAs throughout the semester for every semester they teach. Instruction should be a continual process no matter how many semesters a TA has taught. These workshops would be a great place for exchanging ideas, improving our own teaching methods, or even adopting new activities or styles.

119	C	As an institution we are currently reworking our composition courses in an effort to help students master the skills needed to write effectively. The one piece I would add is professional development into best practices for teaching composition.
120	N/A	We have a system of ongoing assessment of the division, department, and individual courses.
121	B	I would require all instructors to observe the quality controls we have for grading assignments, meeting student outcomes, and course requirements.
122	N/A	I would love to have more time...There are so many interesting things to teach! =)
123	G	Require more specific instructional time to teaching students how to incorporate research into the essay. Address plagiarism, intentional and unintentional, more specifically during instructional time.
124	A, F, G	Provide a section of Composition I that covers grammatical structures and essay types. Find a better way of providing books to students, since textbook costs are so high. Include technical writing as part of the composition course.
125	A	I would require that all fyc students write a research paper that involves conception of topic, independent research, multiple drafts, and documentation of sources. Some instructors instead assign an annotated bibliography, so students who have met the fyc prerequisite for higher level courses may have never written a research paper.
126	G	That more emphasis are placed on grammar
127	A, B	I would further clarify the differences between Composition I and II so that clear and different objectives could be met. I would incorporate a different textbook for adjuncts and probationary faculty.
128	D	I'd add a third semester of required composition class. In the final semester, students would continue to hone the skills they'd developed earlier and would emphasize developing their own

		clear style as well as writing for different audiences.
129	H	The size of the classes should be smaller.
130	C	Offer more faculty development that focuses on rhetoric and its relation to writing, genre, and writing process, as well as opens conversations among faculty in different disciplines on what they value in student writing, how they themselves write, the kinds of writing they assign, and how they mentor student writing.
131	A, E, J	I would add creativity as a component I would add technology as a component I would insist on students passing a more rigorous readiness test prior to entrance into composition classes.
132	A	I would want to collaborate more closely with other disciplines to find ways for students to transfer skills effectively into and out of composition courses.
133	A	select easier material for them to read and discuss.
134	N/A	None come to mind
135	N/A	I'm not sure. While I think there are a number of problems with English Composition and the university in general, I don't feel like I have a good idea on how to improve many of the systemic problems in academe.
136	A	I would FIRST provide a broad cultural overview of human development in four areas to all students, and in this order: anthropological -- historic social -- historic political -- present global Recent high school graduates generally have very little understanding of the universal journey of mankind, which we expect them to join willingly, enthusiastically and productively. Their ignorance, however, causes student anxiety, classroom reluctance and missed connections. The goals of thoughtful reading and writing are much easier to reach once a foundation has been laid, students' questions have been addressed and curiosity and confidence have been restored to the learning process.
137	A	We'd stop focusing on the types of essays that composition

		textbooks insist that we teach and instead focus on the types of writing students need for success in college.
138	A	I would make both semesters of freshman English focus on writing exclusively, rather than a mix of writing and literature.
139	G	Students still need to spend more time on coherence and grammar. If they don't have the tools, they can't do the trade.
140	A, B, F	I would use different texts, showing a wide range of genres and writing styles, focus on the writing process with a portfolio system as a final assessment set in place, I would have rubrics available to help those teachers who struggle with grading papers, and I would create a space for writing groups to exist.
141	D	Our current program has done a lot to ensure that students are reading complex texts. That's good for them in the long run--and I think we see evidence of gains through the semester--but at least initially it means that the writing often suffers because students' ability to read the assigned readings is not very good. The solution I've argued for--unsuccessfully--is a two-semester sequence: a first semester of critical reading and discussion (with writings focused more on summary of readings), and a second semester of argumentative writing. I don't think that our program is doing things "wrong," only that it's damn hard to get all of our objectives "right" in a mere 15 weeks.
142	D, E, H	There are many: - Reduce class size to fifteen students - Increase the testing score for admittance into basic composition - Have an on campus Writing Center - Offer only face to face composition classes, instead of online - Require all students to attend a pre-semester workshop on composition basics (grammar, vocabulary, basic researching skills)
143	A, C, E, G	The Traditional Workshop approach to teaching students would be implemented because students need to interact systematically with their writing and critical thinking, instead of merely creating hit or miss outcomes. Grammar rules will be taught in its basic form, along with teaching the actual essay. Students who do not pass placement exams upon entry into college will have to enroll in composition courses that meet

		more than the standard three hours a week. I would hire "real" English teachers who are not searching for fame and glory. Reading courses on the college level are not practical; I would eliminate these courses.
144	N/A	I would like to somehow make it clear to the students that the skills they learn in composition are meant to be carried over to other classes. Often it seems students do not apply what they have learned in the 1st composition course to their 2nd, and even more common, they seem to assume that if a class isn't a writing class, they need not remember or apply anything learned in composition. I have no idea how to do this though. This is more of a wish of being able to wave a magic wand and improve the situation, than of being in charge of the composition classes.
145	E	Require a rigorous entrance exam. The things I talk about above they should have learned in high school, so that it is extremely difficult for them to master once in college.
146	B	I might have some type of more formal departmental review of research papers at the last level in our sequence both to norm what we all view as acceptable and to more clearly define for the students what is acceptable.
147	F	Primarily, that other classes (Psychology, Sociology, History, etc.) that should require writing at length, assign writing at length. The more a student is asked to do so, and is assessed/graded on the writing, the more competent the student will be in showing depth of understanding and ability to think critically.
148	C	I would need more funding than we currently have. I would want to pay our adjunct instructors more (with the current wage we can't get many competent people), and I would require them to have ongoing instruction in composition pedagogy. Just because someone has an advanced degree in English doesn't mean that person has any clue how to teach it.
149	N/A	No changes. I think our program works effectively.
150	A, D, H	I would make sure the classes remained no larger than 15 students, with more time to conference with students about

		<p>their writing. I wouldn't have a theme based course nor would I choose the handbook, which is currently being used. It's inadequate for the ESL students I teach. I would also make sure that the required courses and credits that students take in composition courses stay the same or increases, rather than decrease as the university is proposing.</p>
151	D, I	<p>I would increase the length of time students spent in class to at least four hours a week and limit the number of students to fifteen. Then I would limit the number of composition classes an instructor could teach to three per semester to be fully loaded. I would not permit any instructor to carry an overload for any reason. Students would be required to write every week and do frequent revisions.</p>
152	A, B, D, F	<p>Let me begin by saying that I find the framing of the study somewhat troubling. After 4 years in the high school classroom and more than 25 in the college classroom, I am more than convinced that "successful" writing goes well beyond knowing, understanding, and applying something. Successful writers, in spite of their occasional failures, will find that writing will allow them to achieve what Maslow calls self-actualization. Successful writing will usually involve both personal and intellectual growth. Of course, it is probably impossible to access such growth. Framing writing as the acquisition and deployment of skills, however necessary those skills are, ultimately reduces writing to that is analogous to pre-fab housing. It is serviceable and successful, but only in the most limited way, one which impoverishes the classroom. That being said, I also recognize that difficulty that comes with trying to teach writing as something more than a collection of skills. So, what would I do? First, I would convince the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools require that students demonstrate competency in a variety of genres--independent of time spent in the classroom. In other words, some students might work their way through English 1001 in 6 weeks while others might require 8 months. My real first? I would design a common rubric or rubrics and use them campus-wide in all writing intensive classes. That common rubric would force discussion among faculty and some</p>

		<p>agreement about what is essential to good writing.</p> <p>Second, I would sequence assignments that would slowly decenter the students' egos. For instance, I would begin with an assignment that asked for the students to develop a personal voice and some skill with sentence structure, diction, paragraphing, dialogue, etc. I would sequence this assignment so that students would receive feedback and a grade on the same paper twice. I would follow that with an assignment with a review. This sort of assignment allows me to pull students partially from personal discourse into public discourse. I would also sequence this assignment so that students would receive feedback and a grade on the same paper twice. I would follow that with an less personal assignment than the review: rhetorical analyses, position statement, report. I would also sequence this assignment so that students would receive feedback and a grade on the same paper twice. I would use this last paper to introduce the skills of quoting, citing, documenting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.</p> <p>Third, I would administer an across the board exam to all first semester comp classes to determine how well my approach had worked. The first section of the exam would be "objective." In it, I would ask students to recognize the differences among genres, drafts, student writing, professional writing. I would also test for a rudimentary knowledge of documentation and citation.</p> <p>Fourth, I would ask for a portfolio of the students work and ask that a group of faculty evaluate each portfolio using a rubric.</p> <p>Fifth, I have second composition class that would build upon the first and that would have a research component in which students learned how to summarize, paraphrase, and quote. Each student would submit a research proposal, confer with his teacher, rewrite the proposal, write a rough draft, and then write a final draft.</p>
153	F, H	I would make class size smaller. Also, I would mix the international student population in with the foundational course for Americans. Currently, there are separate foundational classes for them.
154	B	I would attempt to make all the Comp.I classes parallel.

155	A, B, C	More consistent approaches More dialogue among faculty More professional development opportunities Restructure class format
156	H	Smaller class sizes to enable more intensive instructional time with less students. A smaller class load to enable instructors to grade fewer essays and assignments, allowing them to work on more individualized lesson plans conducive to the current needs of students in a particular class.
157	F	I would seek to obtain a firm commitment from the Chancellor and faculty from all divisions that writing skills and academic integrity matter. Lacking that commitment to literacy, writing skills and critical thinking -- not just as a list of learning objectives for the institution, but as areas for which faculty and students are evaluated -- I would not wish to be in charge of composition classes at my institution.
158	E, H	Require students below an ACT/SAT English composite score to successfully complete remedial courses in reading comprehension, basic composition, and sentence structure and grammar, capitalization, and punctuation in classes no larger than 10 students.
159	B	I would work to standardize the curriculum across all sections of composition. It would enable us to build on knowledge we know students would have been exposed to in previous courses. This would encourage all of the instructors to work together to build the best curriculum. It would enable the tutoring center to be more useful to us. It would encourage students to help each other and to ask for help from each other.
160	A, D	First, I would divide composition classes so that they are taken across four semesters. Then, I would stress that the writing that we teach is for academia. Too many students and instructors believe that they are teaching creative, touchy-feely, personal types of writing. We need to create business and professional communicators not getting in touch with self.
161	B, C	Clarify, strengthen and coordinate assessment efforts; encourage and support faculty to become a real presence in each others'

		classrooms (as visitors, guest lecturers, ethnographers, participant/observers) and not just within the English department.
162	H, J	Teach writing in computer labs. Smaller class sizes. [Get better students]
163	G, I	frequent essays, short in length, 1-2 pages, drill thesis and organization into them; strong focus on mechanics
164	A, B, C, I	require consistent grading standards across the program strive to require less personal writing and more academic-oriented writing provide workshops for faculty on commenting encourage faculty to meet with students individually on a regular basis encourage more graded revision
165	A	Require all formal writing assignments be source-based
166	F, K	More emphasis on the ability to think critically and less emphasis on assessable outcomes.
167	F, H	I would reduce the class size to no more than 12 students. I would make it a longer class session that meets less times. Two 1.5 hour classes seem to be more effective than 3 50-minute classes.
168	E, F	I would raise the requirements for admittance into English 101 and offer the needed remedial grammar classes. I would liaise with state high schools to be sure their English teachers are aware of what students will need to know in order to be prepared for college English. I would be clear about what kind of academic writing skills are really needed at the university level and be sure to not teach them skills they will most likely never use again.
169	A	I'd insist on more fiction -- short stories and novels. Many nonfiction essays are fine, but nothing gets a conversation going like a great piece of fiction. With fiction, you can get into the big questions -- existential questions about life and making meaning -- that students, especially students on the brink of adulthood, deal with on a daily basis. These composition essays found in so many readers, especially ones dealing with race and gender,

		don't grab students' interest. They don't care -- those are issues for the Baby Boom generation; the new crop of students are over it, and they end up thinking that writing courses deal with issues that they don't care about.
170	F	Current cycle works extremely well. The only change I advocate and want to make is to revisit the idea of allowing entering freshmen with AP credit skip one or both entry-level composition courses.
171	A	I'm interested in a writing across the curriculum approach. Students show up to composition resenting being in the room. Depending on the content I/we choose, they may or may not like the course--it's a rough place to start.
172	A, I, J	Emphasize the process-oriented approach to the teaching of composition, which I have been using successfully since 1974. Use computer labs as the setting for the teaching of writing and work with students on an individual basis. Require the reading of contemporary magazines, newspapers, news on the internet. Encourage the students, no matter how inadequate their preparation has been and show them how to start from scratch to an acceptable piece of writing. Require several drafts of an essay with instructor guidance at each stage until the student produces an acceptable piece of writing. Discuss grammatical problems when they arise with only those students who have them. [This should never be a lecture class.]
173	B, E	I would require a higher competency level from remedial English classes (English 90) before allowing the students to move onto English 101, freshman composition. I would standardize the criteria for expected competencies at each level of composition and critical reading and writing. As it now stands, there is much subjectivity involved in interpreting the "goals" of each level of freshman English. Subsequently, students sometimes repeat or entirely miss skills necessary for success in college. It is helpful to be able to select textbooks, create assignments and syllabi without department oversight, but clearer guidelines as to

		expected outcomes would be most helpful.
174	N/A	None
175	A	I would encourage the other faculty to teach their composition classes using the Writing Workshop model, so that they can see the students' writing processes in action and be more easily able to catch student deficiencies.
176	C, F, H	I believe the most important change would be to stop the abuse of part-time instructors (at our institution, over 52% of our classes are taught by adjuncts) and hire more full-time faculty, especially in the gatekeeper courses such as composition, math, and reading. Another change would honor the NCTE resolutions on course load and student class numbers; at our institution, most of us teach five (5) composition courses each semester with class caps at 25 (but often approach 30). Another change would not allow developmental learners to enroll in online developmental composition courses; their performance in subsequent composition courses does not recommend online instruction's effectiveness. Our institution's emphasis on numbers and increasing enrollment (and tuition) does not extend (except through lip service) to ensuring that those students complete their general studies required courses, complete their Associate's degrees, and transfer for further postsecondary education. I would enlist our state legislature's understanding and assistance to help us depend less on part-time faculty so full-time instructors could ensure that our students receive the quality instruction they need to persist, complete, and transfer in the most cost-effective process.
177	F	I would encourage instructors to engage their students' in the students' own learning outcomes through diverse teaching strategies.
178	F	Here at [IDENTIFIER DELETED] our terms are only ten weeks long. First year students take two terms of writing. In the first term they will be instructed by professors who are writers and who have been trained, either through long experience or through graduate programs, in the teaching of writing. In the second

		term they will be instructed by specialists in a variety of fields who may or may not be skilled teachers of writing. What we most need to do here is to 1. develop more consistency in writing instruction across the two term sequence and 2. improve transfer by linking the two terms of instruction more tightly.
179	G, H	I would reduce the number of them and place emphasis on the following basics: thesis, content, organization, grammar, style, and transitions.
180	I	This university's program is quite effective, however I teach composition at another university in which more papers are required. Overall, I think less papers and more focus on revision is the most useful, especially with a focus on in-class revision workshops or worksheets.
181	G	Standard essay rigor
182	A, D, E, H	Students would be divided into sections by ability, so teaching could be customized for their needs. Writing classes would be quite small -- no larger than 12 students per section. Students requiring remedial assistance, such as those lacking basic English skills (including both non-native speakers and native speakers), would have some kind of tutorial instruction in their first year, rather than being grouped with more competent students in a large writing class with expectations beyond their capabilities. Such students would be required to complete at least two semesters of composition instruction. An integrative approach, where English composition would be taught within the structure of other disciplines, also might be more effective. For example, team teaching with a writing teacher and an anthropology or science teacher might allow a dual focus on content and composition, while avoiding the mediocrity and superficiality of topics common to the freshman essay.
183	A	Allow faculty, in conjunction with the library and resources management, prepare their own textbooks from handouts and readings they are likely to use, rather than using proscribed texts that may or may not work with the teacher's philosophy.

184	A, B, C	I would pair Writing classes with subject matter classes. A writing class could be paired with Psychology. In this case, the Psychology class would have numerous writing assignments and the writing process for those assignments would take place in the Writing class. Also, I would train all faculty on basic writing principles. Then, all faculty would grade writing in all courses.
185	E	I don't know. My students seem to have passed High School in a daze. Most don't read and have no instinctual, automatic grasp of written English. I think I would require noncredit English (100) for all students.
186	D	require more courses
187	A, C	I have already started to push for a wide array of changes, including: "changing" the curriculum to more closely reflect the rigor of colleges that students will transfer to allowing for individual instructors to choose their textbooks rather than a boilerplate text that no one is happy with or use change our system of seniority within the department--currently, the "older" faculty teach 200-level courses while the "newer" faculty handle the comp courses. This is an issue as no one in the department actually has rhetoric or writing backgrounds. We all come from literature backgrounds Hire one or two true writing and rhetoric instructors Increase academic responsibility among instructors: many instructors do little to advance their knowledge within their chosen field
188	A	I would consider trying small peer review groups that would meet with the instructor to discuss feedback for drafts of research papers.
189	J, K	Technology would be available in every class. Ipads or other device to allow student participation. Analysis would be emphasized and required throughout the course.
190	D	Even more developmental writing is needed at our institution. Tutorials even at the advanced level would help.
191	D	Require a second semester of English composition for all students in some majors (not hard trades)

**APPENDIX I: Question 11 Additional Comments and Observations**

Ref. #	Comments
1	This is important research-- let me know how I can help!
2	I hope to see the results of your research in print one day!
3	My only suggestion would be improving the salary & benefits (such as health care & sick days) for faculty. Appalling. Impossible to live on for any length of time. I will move back overseas where lecturers are paid a living wage.
4	FYI, I realize that the "skills" I listed in #3 above may have as much to do with attitude and understanding as they do with skill. Nevertheless I chose to list them, because I feel they are the foundation of all good writing, including the writing of "a good academic composition." Without a strong foundation in these (what I consider) skills, a composition student may have much trouble making progress with writing.
5	Overall, research and publication in this field tends to be tedious and redundant.
6	Good luck in your research.
7	Nicholas Carr wrote an interesting book called <i>The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brain</i> . It is only one book that examines the decline in linear thinking due to internet use. Sherry Turkle also wrote an interesting book, <i>Alone Together</i> , which examines our relationship to robotics and how that is affecting our communication and interactions. All of this, of course, affects our writing ability.
8	I have seen a significant drop in the ability to write effectively over the past ten years. My concern is that these students do not learn how to write throughout their years in public school anymore.
9	Before I came to the University, I taught English for twenty five years at the high school level, three years as the school district's coordinator of the gifted and talented program for grades 7-12, and four years teaching English at the

	junior high level.
10	My apologies for being late. We had a family emergency! It's good to know someone is looking at this issue of skill levels and preparedness.
11	If the basics of writing are not mastered- i.e. correct grammar and the adjunct of mechanics - the student will forever struggle and try to fill the gaps, which never seems to work. No matter how good the thinking is, if it is not correctly put down on paper, the essay is unacceptable.
12	Why does the survey not make a distinction between community colleges, small 4-year colleges, and universities? My institution is a small liberal arts college offering bachelors degrees.
13	With so much competition from visual sources, reading has been neglected in our younger students. The reading- writing connection needs to be emphasized
14	I spend 95 percent of my time reading composition papers, research papers, etc. We currently have a student-faculty book club and study 2 books per semester, but I rarely get to read for pleasure until summer vacation.
15	Good luck. Even if only half of the people you've contacted respond, you'll have a ton of qualitative data to code.
16	It has been my experience that opportunities for advancement for adjuncts is not what it should be.
17	Instead of reading articles limited to writing instruction, I've been reading articles on brain research and about the effects of the Internet and being wired 24/7 on everyone . . . and then making application of those findings to writing instruction.
18	What students most glaringly lack is experience writing at an academic level; practice with a variety of academic writing assignments and quick feedback are the most critical elements necessary to bring up a student's level of performance. Students need time to adjust their minds and ears in the way that all language students must do. They require astute role models with lots of patience to achieve this task.

19	Administrators are often reluctant to increase the level of academic rigor due to enrollment concerns. Unfortunately, developmental courses often do not focus on the skills students need to succeed in their basic 100-level courses. Instead, instructors often fall back on the high school-level technique of focusing on "what students WANT to write about" rather than teaching useful skills.
20	Good reading is what makes good writers, in my opinion. I use expressive writing to help students suss out their ideas ("thesis").
21	I find that increasingly, state institutions are being dictated and governed from above. The administrative pressures are not student centered. I am required to attend meetings where students are referred to as "customers," and are expected to pass without sufficient competency. I teach a blue collar student body and I am convinced that the system wants to only train these people as workers, rather than thinkers. This mediocrity is not only limiting since analysis increases a person's quality of life regardless of what he or she may choose as an occupation, but the mass worker bee approach is the reason stupidity is rampant in this country. Instead, providing every individual with the skills necessary for analysis is more likely to help them realize goals they are unable to articulate themselves when they first enter my classes. What I do is not a job or even a calling, it is holy work. I am here to change lives and to give these students the skills (and the self certainty) with which they can affect their own changes. A bit tongue and cheek, but if I could, I would make critical analysis a requirement for every voting citizen.
22	I have become interested in how students learn, but not specifically how they learn to write. Much good luck with your research!
23	Not at this time. Good luck with survey and research.
24	Technology is a part of the answer, but not the whole answer. Bottom line is still students who want to learn plus teachers who know how to teach. Good luck in your work!
25	The number of students with language issues has grown exponentially. Many have disabilities; some speak English as a second language; some have never had their writing thoroughly examined and evaluated. Many feel that

	<p>competent writing is not an important skill and that it is not reinforced in other subject areas. It is much more of a challenge to teach writing than ever before. People who take this job seriously do not have much of a life outside of preparing lessons and grading papers. I would love to incorporate more technology into my instruction; I think writing textbooks should be abandoned in favor of interactive, media-rich materials that mirror the real world in which the students live.</p>
26	<p>I always teach Orwell's "Politics and the English Language." It's the cornerstone of my instruction.</p>
27	<p>We need to insist that students come from secondary schools well-skilled in grammar and mechanics. This was once the case. I spend too, too much time marking these problems that should not exist in the first place. Remedial courses cannot rectify a weak academic background in which standards were set and maintained as they once were at least since the sixth grade. Many years ago, when I started teaching at the secondary level, the student writing from even most of the then-considered mediocre students was superior to what most of the best college students produce today. Part of the problem, again, is the ridiculous opposition to teaching grammar intensively and the fact that students do not have the background in serious reading they once had. This lack is reflected in style, maturity, and even vocabulary.</p>
28	<p>All the best on your project.</p>
29	<p>I wish students came able to read--really read and take responsibility for their understanding. I wish all students came having mastered the 5-paragraph form. Then we could start by taking off the training wheels and really developing ideas. As it is, I spend too much time on thesis and organization and too little on the finer points of tone, style, and argument.</p>
30	<p>Recently, more students seem to want a formula for writing. They seem to struggle with interpretation of assignments and critical thinking in general.</p>
31	<p>Level of Education: PhD</p>
32	<p>I have taught for over 40 years, almost 30 years as an adjunct at [IDENTIFIER DELETED]. The most effective shift I have seen is from literature based</p>

	<p>composition to student based composition: when the writing involves the student, the quality of writing dramatically increases, and that, obviously, is a good thing. The second effective change has been in organizing freshman composition from writing from the self to writing outside the self, looking at argument from other positions. Finally, the requirement that we have in writing argument is that students must be able to brag or offer credibility from every source. the attempt by some students to use fox "news" as a source or some right-wing religious nut case as a source can only be used to prove how narrow and prejudiced those sources are.</p>
33	<p>Teaching composition is not the stuff of rocket science. Let the PhDs theorize. I'll teach my students how to write and how to process information into knowledge. Give them a topic to catch their interest. Encourage deep reading and deep thinking, i.e. fight the rising tide of a superficial, ignorant and unaware cultural mainstream. Our democracy cannot persist without a populous generally educated in the humanities. Those who don't understand this essential premise are the ones to fear. At times I worry that ignorance is becoming so widespread, even among post-secondary educators that, in my lifetime, America will lose its standing as possessing the world's greatest higher education system. Where the collapse may begin, as I mentioned above, is in funding formulas nationwide that favor "job" and "market" oriented coursework over the "useless" humanities.</p>
34	<p>Much of how I teach writing comes from my background as a professional writer of magazine articles, stories, and novels, and as a former full-time proposal writer.</p>
35	<p>DL is also a factor in the discipline.</p>
36	<p>What I find perhaps most difficult in teaching students in English composition is that fewer of them are committed to personal development, and more of them are committed to simply jumping through hoops, than is helpful to me in an English class. I find that the best writing comes from dedication to saying something, or at least enjoying saying something, but most of these students don't see college as an opportunity to learn as much as they can. Rather, they see it as a mostly off-topic step in acquiring the credentials they need to make enough money to have a family. Though I don't have a</p>

	<p>problem with students wanting to get trained so they can have stable lives, I wish they could see that learning as much as they can also benefits their future family life, especially when it comes time to help their children with their homework. I hear this complaint often, usually in a discussion of what truly makes for a bachelor's degree, as opposed to a technical degree. Also, if I may comment on my response to question 5, I think that the preparedness of students largely depends on the commitment of the individual student. Students who are committed to learning tend to be well prepared, students who don't catch the vision of an education, unless they happen to be "naturally" good writers, tend to improve, but perhaps not as much as their writing instructor would really like.</p>
37	<p>I've experimented in comp with various approaches for 30 years. What I do now works better than anything else I've tried, but I'm most definitely not satisfied with it; students regularly take my lit classes the semester after comp only to fail utterly at making a thesis or using detail effectively. Very frustrating. I think it indicates that we have to be in the business of teaching comp all four years in all classes, not just the first year in one class. When I remind my former students of what we talked about in comp, they can usually write better papers, but unless I keep re-teaching it to some degree, they DON'T do it. In my view, the big drawbacks to comp are that 1) faculty as a group don't want to teach it, 2) students don't think they should have to take it, and 3) both assume that if a student takes it once, then everything necessary has been learned once and for all. Totally not true. Unfortunately, these attitudes seem so intractable (especially faculty attitudes!) that I sometimes wonder if the freshman comp model is workable. Shouldn't someone study this in a way that tells us whether or not comp meets the goal that it almost universally espouses--to help students improve the writing they do during their college careers? Or has someone already done this and I don't know about it? Please point it out to me if it's already out there!</p>
38	<p>More than 40 percent of the students I teach have poor grammar skills.</p>
39	<p>Thank you for allowing me to submit my thoughts.</p>
40	<p>I think we are undoing ourselves through the push to dual-credit classes in high school. I think it severely diminishes the importance placed on freshman</p>

	composition and serves to erode standards of excellence. Also, too many of my students don't really know how to do homework. Evidently they have never had to sit still by themselves and focus on something for more that about 10 minutes.
41	Good luck with the survey.
42	The first question on the survey should include a slot for 4 year colleges. They are different from universities and community colleges.
43	Composition courses have shifted out of the hands of professors and into the hands of graduate students, who will do the same work for pittance. While I love teaching composition in hand with my graduate work, this model spells trouble for institutions, instructors, and students in the long run.
44	Seldom do I see articles used in texts that represent the far left or right in any opinion or argumentative piece. Our society is saturated with sound bites and opinion, and students have little chance to interact with polarizing arguments and how to assess them without simply "writing them off." In our recent election, the country is split almost in half, and few voices seem to be able to clearly state, understand, and calmly respond to someone with whom they disagree. Thank you.
45	There needs to be more discourse between the community, the colleges and businesses as to what types of writing are needed so the colleges can make sure to teach those skills. I also believe that the high schools should do more with critical thinking and less with filling in the correct bubble.
46	We make great efforts to provide relevant classes for our students. In order to do this, we update materials and methods regularly.
47	1. Administrators are allowing more unqualified students into composition classes via testing and placement. Students that belong in developmental classes are placed in freshman composition. 2. Faculty are pressured to produce high progressive grade rates, so some inflate their grades, passing students who do not deserve to be passed. 3. Students do not put in the necessary time and effort into their class work. They have not been taught to do so by their parents and the k-12 system.

	Thus, the problem exists with all parties and must be addressed by all parties.
48	I am grateful to be able to work within the field of my passion! =)
49	Allowing a certain amount of negotiation on the reading selection will allow students to be a part of the composition course and give them a chance to be creative as well as academic.
50	It seems to me that the opening question of the survey will reinforce conceptions of writing instruction more in line with current traditional rhetoric, as it narrowly focuses on "skills" (i.e. writing a thesis statement) than knowledge (i.e. analyzing a rhetorical situation).
51	I have taught in public school (7-8 grade, inner city), community colleges, in the prison system, and in the university. Teaching composition is something people do not wish to do because it needs to start early and continue beyond sixth grade- but it does not. We suck the fun out of writing and English teachers- especially in high school- do not wish to teach it. So they do not. Then we college teachers pass on students who are unprepared for the rigors of college reading and writing and set students up for failure in the academy. Whose fault is this? The answer is that it is all of us. We need to overhaul the U.S. educational system and gear it less towards industrialism and more towards the 21st century.
52	I found this short survey personally and professionally beneficial.
53	Good luck with the project -- I hope you'll send out a follow-up email to participants once you've got a report of results!
54	School systems (middle and high schools) should really consider trying to teach grammar rules more often to students so that students will be better prepared for college level writing.
55	I see that this survey comes from a College of Education, so I'm likely "preaching to the choir" here, but I don't think that composition classes are going to improve until we can convince English departments that pedagogical content knowledge is important. We will also continue to have problems if inexperienced graduate students and adjuncts continue to teach most of our composition courses. Then again, many of our full time faculty (myself

	included) don't have backgrounds in composition. At our institution all English faculty are required to teach composition, and many of us are not really qualified to do so. A masters in Romantic poetry or a PhD in Shakespeare don't really cut it!
56	Reading and writing is so important for students in their future lives and careers. I think that with all the current technology which is available, students don't realize that or care about those skills. It's imperative that the over dependence that current students have on technology be taken into account, but we, as teachers, shouldn't totally cave into technology.
57	Since administrators expect us to produce magical outcomes with more than 120 writing students a semester, I don't expect any changes in a system with decreasing funds and increasing expectations. Those who teach at four-year institutions may have more success with improving the writing quality of their students, but we at the community college level struggle daily to have our students produce decent writing.
58	I am sorry that my suggestions are so broad. However, I also do not believe that you can help students write well if faculty don't agree on what successful writing is (knowledge is contingent) and if you do not design a program that gradually moves the student from private discourse into public discourse. Writing a comparison essay, a cause-effect essay, etc. does not work well. Ultimately the activity of writing needs to reinforce itself and to have applications beyond the freshman comp classroom.
59	I would be interested in learning the results of your survey. Good luck with it.
60	Students today need more traditional/basic instruction on thesis, organization, development of ideas, and clarity in first and second year composition courses. While technology is good, some younger instructors are using it (iPads, YouTube, etc.) for the "fun" factor or as "edu-tainment." More focus must be put on the development of basic skills and reading readiness on the college level.
61	Writing is fundamental to all other academic pursuits, yet it has devolved, for the most part, into a semi-philosophy/creative writing exercise. At least that is what I see in textbooks. George Orwell once said that when "...our language

	becomes slovenly, we become a nation of fools." All of the recent data concerning reading and writing skills suggests that we have, indeed, become very slovenly.
62	I'd like to believe if I got paid more, I would be a better teacher, but that might just be wishful thinking. Note: I said university for institution, but that was mostly because that is where the invitation email went to. I teach 6 courses a year here, but I also teach 5 a year at a community college as well.
63	Teaching writing at the community college level requires socializing students into thinking of themselves as "scholars" or "authorities." Students are willing to write but very challenged by academic sources. Their reading skills are fairly weak.
64	Students have a very diverse set of interests and skills when it comes to writing. Some students really want to improve, while others just see Composition as just another English class like they had to take in High School. I wish we could find a way to completely shift the perspective of those students. For the students who are highly motivated and want to be better writers, I wish I had more time to talk to and provide feedback for them. When you have to teach 3-4 sections of composition, which means you have 60-80 papers coming in at a time, timely and effective feedback is always suffers.
65	Our English 101 classes seem to be constantly evolving. Our department is not given any say about the test that students take to determine readiness for English 101. We can't turn away the students who are unprepared so they wind up failing the course. TAs are told by department heads to put in place practices that the research shows do not improve student writing. It's all very frustrating. TAs lose their motivation pretty quickly around here. I hope your research is successful!!
66	Students need to read more. I don't know when this idea came about that students can learn to write without reading, but its nonsense. Good God, even creative writing majors don't read anymore. That's nothing less than ridiculous.

67	I am also credentialed in the teaching of writing, which I have done since 1974. My professors were (IDENTIFIERS DELETED) who were considered pioneers in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. I was then privileged to have (IDENTIFIERS DELETED) as colleagues.
68	Not related to anything on my end! I wish you well. I would like to know, however, how this will translate into changes at my university, if at all. Will there be any input into the universities' English departments concerning your findings? Best wishes to you!
69	The problems associated with part-time instruction present a real challenge for public community colleges whose state funding has been reduced dramatically over the past twenty-five years. Our institution pays adjuncts at a rate over \$1,000 less per three-credit course than the national community college low average for such instruction. Acknowledging that almost all colleges and universities are relying more and more on part-time instruction does not ease the burden on these well-intentioned instructors who often work at three or more different institutions to make little more than minimum wage (or poverty level) with the same credentials as full-time faculty. Add to this observation the growing bloat of administrative positions and support staff (at our institution, this ratio to that of full-time faculty is approaching 3:1), and the future of public higher education, particularly that of community colleges, looks bleak. It might take a few more years, but "Academically Adrift" might become more applicable to community colleges when one looks at the numbers of students who actually complete what they started there. As a country, we can do better. And we should.
70	The challenge for teachers at any educational level is finding out what interests the students and using that as a hook to get them learning while enjoying themselves. For example, a student whose primary focus is on athletics should be encouraged to pursue topics relating to that field, even if the professor is less inclined to enjoy discussions of athletics.
71	I've found that one of the most useful tools as an adjunct professor is being able to meet and brainstorm with more experienced faculty to implement new ideas. I'm constantly trying new ways to engage my classes and get them actively involved in the writing process in class so many of them don't fall

	back on the night-before writing mentality.
72	I've been teaching creative writing and literature at the college level for years, but this is my first semester teaching composition. It seems nearly impossible to do a good job, given the skills (or lack thereof) the students are bringing to college and the lengthy list of expectations the college places on the single semester of introductory writing.
73	I think on-line education is a terrible idea for English composition. My biggest grading problem is that most students just paraphrase stuff they find on the internet, and it's impossible to catch unless they write in front of you. I require them to compose for an hour a week, using Notepad and no Internet sources. That's an eye-opener.
74	Books, journals, and conferences ("professional development") are all nice, and our college pays a significant amount of money for people to attend these conferences or to create conferences, but what I have seen in our system is that "going to a conference" essentially means "hanging out with my friends." Very few of the conferences seem to add anything substantial; some of the state-sponsored conferences even seem to promote socialization over academic discussion.
75	Technology is in every student's pocket and until we allow and incorporate phones and other devices in our classroom we will forever be a step behind.

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