

Discussion of English faculty in the State College sector

Best practices from an access institution

- Would have liked to hire a First Year writing coordinator but it was not approved

- Use specialized workshops based on diagnostics that include peer review (have noted however that LS students do not do as well in this as the non-LS students)

- Providing a rubric to standardize grading among instructors

- TILT assignments including course descriptions and a rubric

- Changed grading process – instead of circling all of the errors now keep a tally of the type of error in the margin and ask the student to go find it

- To help prepare and encourage LS students encourage revisions in exams for credit in the co-req course but also offer a grade change in the credit level course

- Limit who can take an online class

- Start with a “fluff” (Who am I? Where do I come from?) assignment to put the student at ease and then show how it ties into the next assignment. This also gives them early success and builds confidence that the student can do it. This goes to mindset. Another example is an advice column response where they have to tell someone what to do but they have to tell them why it is the correct course of action.

- Have them record or talk their essays

Questions asked – What are the English standards? Is it the number of essays written or the outcomes that result. The state standard requires the equivalency of 25 pages but not the number of assignments, however some instructors get hung up on the numbers. (Some like using repetitive assignments that build skills and eventually add up to the 25 pages.)

Is there uniformity in the classes? Want it but don't have it

Overall there was a concern about faculty gatekeepers and old standards that are not productive (i.e. three common splices and you fail)

For LS classes, the students need scaffolding assignments with explicit expectations broken down into small pieces to avoid overwhelming the student. You need to build the skills over time. You can't do the same old thing you have always done.

An example of what works – forcing them to follow the writing process but it has to be demanded of the students and tracked. Teach it and then make them follow it. Starts with giving an essay assignment that could be about 2 weeks out. Get them to do their first rough draft but don't ask them to turn it in. Next week ask for a polished draft and if not turned in it is a 10 point deduction. When they turn it in, do peer review where they read it out loud to the group and start marking up the changes. In the next week, ask for a semi-final draft (again 10 point deduction). For the semi-final use a peer review worksheet where they are not allowed to ask clarifying questions. Throughout this process the social interaction component is really capitalized upon.

Comment: Rushing them from paper to paper doesn't work. See how this would work well in LS.

Variation: Give them the rubric that the instructor will be using.

Question: Who uses LS software? Note: There is a temptation to use LS software in LS classes because of the increased workload brought upon by the new co-req model. There are varying degrees of success with software but overall it was felt that it could be used as great homework or supplemental material but the software doesn't really provide students with what they need.

Types of software: Hawkes (difficult software but great customer support), Aplia (bad customer support but software is easier to use) Grammarly.com (sp?) Learning Curve

Issue: New workload of LS added to a 5-5 load as overloads – is there another “lab” model that could be used.

It is important to make explicit connections between the English assignments and the rest of the curriculum. Show students they should use the same criteria for English papers as well as History papers. Otherwise they may not see it. A potential way to accomplish this is through a robust FYE program required of all where they purposely show the connection between classes and also cover mindset. Another idea would be to do a mini-lecture on the first day of course on “this is what it means to be a college student”>

Re faculty mindset – it is important to fight the urge to pre-judge students. You can’t assume they are lazy or unmotivated. They may not even have a quiet place or time to study. You need to get to know students as people.

A teacher should be doing more than just teaching material. There are life skills that are important as well.

Discussed strict attendance policies – i.e. 6th absence is an F – this works wonders in making sure students attend.

2025 end game

Deeper Learning

Learning Communities

Assessing skills across the curriculum

Change to competency based transcripts to show employers how the academic courses and letter grades actually translate to needed skills