Writing the Transition to College: A Summer College Writing Experience at Elon University

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Abstract: The College Writing/Elon Academy summer partnership at Elon University offers a program model for supporting underrepresented students' transition to college. While the modified section of a required first-year writing course has some limitations, the summer course supports students' development of more complex writing processes and provides access to college capital prior to their university matriculation. In this profile we describe our course design, assessment of outcomes, and primary assessment results, and we offer reflections on and recommendations for designing transitional writing courses for underrepresented students based on our experiences.

> "We would like to make a summer section of ENG 110 a part of a larger Transitions Program for our graduating seniors, a key summer experience to help them be best prepared for their life as college freshmen at a variety of schools."
> —Email from Elon Academy Representative to College Writing Coordinator
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> "The Elon Academy request presents a terrific opportunity to pilot a summer session that extends beyond the traditional summer session time boundaries (5 weeks instead of 3) and provides additional support through a daily two-hour Writing Workshop."
> —Internal Grant Application led by College Writing Coordinator, in collaboration with Elon Academy Representative and ENG 110 Faculty Member

What role can first-year writing courses play in supporting underrepresented{1} [#note1] students' transitions to college? A seemingly simple request from the assistant director of a college access and success program provided an opportunity to explore this question. Numerous studies have described the achievement and opportunity gaps that often exist between dominant and underrepresented groups in college. Students from low-income or first generation homes, in particular, may arrive without access to the same sociocultural capital of their more affluent peers – resources, knowledge, skills, and dispositions that traditionally lead to success in higher education. Instead, they commonly have limited access to rigorous and well-resourced high school preparation; cultural mismatches with traditional curriculums and schooling routines; significant emotional and economic pressures; and inadequate advising about the college pathways, financial aid opportunities, and other resources for success. Once accepted to college, underrepresented students must then compete with peers who may have experienced a greater variety of privileged extracurricular opportunities (e.g., science camps, international travel, extra arts and athletics lessons, etc.), as well as the confidence passed along by family members who possess generations of college experience (Davis; Klugman and Butler; Strayhorn). In addition, colleges tend to reflect dominant cultural modes in their curriculum, climate, and student body culture, and students from underrepresented groups often report feeling marginalized or outside of the college experience for a variety of reasons (Villalpando and Solórzano; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, and Solórzano). Their social worlds and cultural strengths are often unrepresented and unrecognized inside and outside of the classroom. Combined with increased

academic and/or financial challenges, it is little wonder that institutes of higher education struggle to retain talented underrepresented students, especially through the first years.

With frequent student-faculty contact and small class sizes, this struggle often becomes visible to faculty in first-year writing classes. Writing faculty often have more opportunities to learn about their students' backgrounds and their college experiences than colleagues in other disciplines who might be teaching first-year students primarily in large, introductory lecture classes. Furthermore, the very writing pedagogies (e.g., one-on-one conferences) that create spaces for students to share their retention-related struggles with faculty (i.e., financial challenges, limited access to resources, feelings of marginalization, etc.) also have potential as retention efforts, since they increase students' contact with faculty (Powell). This program profile examines a collaboration between a college access and success program and a first-year writing program to reimagine a summer section of a required first-year writing course, ENG 110: College Writing, with the goal of preemptively improving students' opportunities for college success—and retention. While we recognize that many aspects of our course are not generalizable to other contexts, the challenges we sought to address (e.g., curriculum design for special populations, adjusting course curricula for summer sessions, providing underrepresented students access to resources essential for success, etc.) are familiar to both first-year writing and broader higher education contexts. We offer our model and our assessment of the course outcomes as one way universities might reexamine or extend their support programs for underrepresented students. This model gives underrepresented students access to college capital while helping them develop writing process strategies that provide a foundation for continued writing instruction and practice across the curriculum.

Context for the Elon Academy

Elon University is a mid-size (5,700 students), private university with a primary emphasis on undergraduate education. Recognized as a model for engaged learning, Elon also is committed to the liberal arts and sciences and to service partnerships. Elon students, faculty, and staff routinely are recognized for their volunteer service hours, and this service commitment has led to several deeper community partnerships, including with the surrounding public schools. In 2006, one public high school six miles away from the university's main campus was threatened with closure by the state for continuing poor performance. The school served predominantly working class and minority students, including a burgeoning immigrant population, groups which are of high concern in the research on achievement and opportunity gaps in K-12 education (Delpit; Noguera and Wing).

The university responded with increased support to the local schools on various fronts, especially for the school that had been so critically in danger of closure. As part of this effort, the university president appointed a senior Education Department faculty member to launch a college access and success program in collaboration with a small team of university faculty and staff, including Kim. The resulting program, Elon Academy, serves academically-promising high school students with significant financial need and/or no family history of college. It builds on models at other schools, including Furman University's Bridges to a Brighter Future (http://www.bridgestoabrighterfuture.org/ [http://www.bridgestoabrighterfuture.org/]) and the Princeton University Preparatory Program (PUPP) (http://www.princeton.edu/pupp/ [http://www.princeton.edu/pupp/]), as well as the successes of other community-based and federal college access initiatives (e.g. Talent Search, Upward Bound, and the TRIO programs). Like these other programs, Elon Academy offers mentorship, support, cognitive and social enrichment, and a space to practice college-ready skills (both academic and personal). It develops student and family knowledge of pathways to higher education, advises and supports academic rigor and advancement, and provides opportunities for enrichment, service, and leadership. The program inspires and enables high school students from backgrounds often underrepresented on college and university campuses to pursue higher education, build leadership

skills, and develop an active sense of social responsibility. Students are recruited from the county schools during their ninth-grade year and agree to participate in a three-year access program that combines intensive four-week residential experiences on Elon's campus during the summers before the 10th, 11th, and 12th grade years, with college-readiness support during the regular school year. The summer program is a four-week residential experience during which students live in the Elon dorms, take specially-designed academic classes taught by Elon faculty and other master teachers, engage in service projects and enrichment opportunities, and begin developing both their knowledge about and individual plans for attaining their dream of attending college. To supplement these summer experiences, the year-round support program provides monthly Saturday sessions on college planning and academic enrichment, regular mentoring by specially trained Elon students and program staff, and tutors who support a more rigorous high school curriculum. Programming is based on a youth development model that supports not only academic skills, but also personal growth—public speaking, self-advocacy, time management, and leadership opportunities, among others. Post-graduation, the Academy continues to follow students through their college years at their chosen college or university, with staff visiting at least once each semester during the first year to offer assistance with the challenges of higher education—from advice about navigating their college resources (academic, social, and financial) to counseling about life decisions that reach beyond the halls of academia. Second-year college students in the program serve as peer mentors to new first-year students, networking with their peers both on their individual campus and across campuses. As the third graduating class heads for college in fall 2012, the program continues to develop in response to the needs of the college participants, with additions such as career- and graduate school-focused programming.

Why Elon Academy Wanted to Offer a Summer Section of First-Year Writing

As the first Elon Academy cohort neared graduation during the 2009-2010 academic year, the program turned its attention to assisting them more specifically with the difficult transition to the college environment, a well-documented stumbling block for many college students and especially difficult for underrepresented students (Davis). Transition programming included workshops on everything from navigating new campus resources to day-to-day managing of scholarship and personal funds, and from approaching college professors during office hours to setting home-rules for roommates with dramatically different lifestyles. In addition to these college life skills, the program also wanted to attend to their academic development in the summer prior to college. Ample research has shown that the summer months between school years allow significant cognitive regression, and summer learning experiences can go a long way toward bolstering students' abilities and confidence (Alexander, Entwistle, and Olson). Academy graduates had spent the previous three summers being challenged on Elon's campus, and the post-graduation summer looked empty and abandoned in comparison. It would be their first summer since arriving in high school that they would have no academic expectations.

For students historically underrepresented in higher education (low-income, first generation, minority and/or immigrant students), ongoing academic preparation during the transition summer may prove especially beneficial. Underrepresented students often bring additional challenges to the college classroom, including those that stem from weaker academic preparation in the critical skills of reading, writing, and quantitative reasoning, as well as social, cultural, and financial mismatches with college norms and expectations (Tierney, Corwin and Colyar; Conley, *Redefining*). Yet they also bring an array of life experiences to college classrooms when they achieve access, enriching the conversation with perspectives different from their more privileged peers. They bring great excitement and enthusiasm for being in college, have strong desire to succeed, and often believe deeply in the value of an education for themselves and others. By creating a sheltered college-level

course that enrolled only Elon Academy graduates and responded both to these students' cognitive, socio-cultural, and financial needs and their strengths, the Academy staff hoped to help Academy graduates transition more thoughtfully and effectively between high school and college and leave them better prepared for the rigors of the college classroom. The modified ENG 110 summer section, while taught and administered separately from the Academy, nevertheless was an extension of the program's high expectations for student academic performance and one more element in the culture of achievement the program seeks to instill in its participants. It also presented students an opportunity to earn college credit towards their degree programs at Elon University or wherever they were matriculating.

Taking any summer term course would have provided a "real" college experience while maintaining Academy graduates' intellectual engagement over the summer months. By offering Elon University's first-year college writing course, however, the Academy hoped to allow students to concentrate exclusively and intensively on developing their writing and research skills, two areas that frequently have been identified as vital to college success (Conley, *Redefining*; Conley, *College Knowledge*; *Framework for Success*). Since writing is a primary gatekeeper to college achievement, the overarching goal was to give Academy graduates a positive (but rigorous) learning experience with college-level writing, not merely an experience with college-level disciplinary content. With no other classes to make additional demands on student attention, students could concentrate on improving their writing through regular practice and thoughtful, reflective analysis of their work.

In addition to focusing their attention on writing, the course also allowed Academy graduates to experience an ideal student-professor relationship and learn from a faculty member who was genuinely aware of students' strengths and weaknesses, passionate about composition studies and student learning, and able to incorporate best pedagogical practices. The professor for the course, Paula, was selected carefully for her ability to address the developmental skill gaps often seen in underrepresented student writing; for her willingness to address college culture issues as they arose; for her desire to build on the enthusiasm, unique experiences, and strengths brought by the students; and, overall, for working with students to become more successful college students as well as more successful academic writers. In this way, the course made the expectations of college immediate and real while simultaneously providing the necessary scaffolding for students who struggled to rise to those expectations. In this small, sheltered section, students should have been unable to fall between the proverbial cracks and unable to hide their missteps—whether in college success behaviors or in college writing. Rather they could practice navigating college learning without fear of being misunderstood or judged for their lack of resources and experience and would have a chance to focus intently on their individualized writing processes. Beyond the classroom, Academy graduates also could discover and begin to hone strategies for balancing the additional responsibilities many underrepresented students might bring with them to the college classroom. Surrounded by familiar others who shared similar social and cultural struggles, the students might experience less of the stigmas of not being able to afford textbooks, of lacking transportation to and from school, or of lacking computer and internet access at home. The very design of the class needed to reduce barriers, especially those erected by financial constraints.

Similarly, the design of the class capitalized on the experiences the Elon Academy graduates brought to the class. Because they had engaged in intensive academic enrichment activities for each of the three previous summers, the students were familiar with balancing academic, work, and social activities during the summer. Since those summer activities had taken place on Elon's campus, the students were familiar with campus resources, from the library to dining services. More important, because the students had been carefully selected for and mentored through Elon Academy, they understood that the stakes were high for this course that would set them squarely on the path to college graduation, and they knew that they had much to lose if they were unsuccessful. Paula

deliberately developed a course theme and writing assignments that would remind students of their past experiences as high school and Elon Academy students and connect those experiences to ones they would encounter as college students.

Why the College Writing Program Collaborated on the Modified Summer Section

At Elon, first-year writing consists of a one-semester, four-credit-hour course, typically taught over a 15-week semester. All sections of College Writing (ENG 110) aim to develop the following:

- A more sophisticated writing process—including invention, peer responding, revising and editing—that results in a clear, effective, well edited public piece;
- A more sophisticated understanding of the relationship of purpose, audience, and voice, and an awareness that writing expectations and conventions vary within the academy and in professional and public discourse; and
- An appreciation for the capacity of writing to change oneself and the world.

Additionally, a shared experiences document (see Appendix 1 [#appendix1]) for the course indicates that ENG 110 should emphasize persuasive writing, while giving students opportunities to work with sources and to practice writing for a variety of academic and non-academic audiences.

In 2008, the Department of English stopped offering summer sections of ENG 110 because program assessment data suggested that students in the accelerated summer sections were not as successful at meeting the program's intended learning outcomes as students who took the course during a regular fall or spring term. In addition, faculty who taught the course expressed frustration with the tenor of the summer sections. The summer sections primarily attracted students who had not met the C- or above graduation requirement the first time they took ENG 110, so students often entered the course with a guarded attitude. Further, learning rhetorically grounded strategies for writing in a variety of contexts requires opportunities for practice and reflection over an extended period of time, and the traditional summer section's condensed schedule simply had not provided enough time for that development.

At the time, the associate provost asked the department to consider resuming the summer section but acknowledged that the parameters needed to change for the learning experience to be more successful. To that end, Jessie, as the College Writing Coordinator, and the associate department chair brainstormed possible modifications to the summer section and proposed piloting a section of ENG 110 that met longer than the three to four weeks allotted for the traditional summer sections. The idea was put on hold, though, until the specific parameters could be planned in more detail.

Elon Academy approached the Department of English in late October 2009 about offering a sheltered summer section of ENG 110 for Elon Academy graduates who would be matriculating at universities (including Elon) in Fall 2010. Because the Elon Academy's summer program traditionally involved having students on campus for a longer period than a traditional summer session and all of the students involved were living in the local community during the summer, the request presented a terrific opportunity to pilot a summer session that would extend beyond the traditional summer session time boundaries (five weeks instead of three) and would provide additional support through a daily two-hour writing workshop.

Drawing partially on a college access grant from North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU), Elon Academy funded the faculty salary for the course, as well as paid for books/materials for the students and a stipend for one teaching assistant (a student with experience

consulting in the Writing Center and with coursework in writing studies and secondary education/pedagogy). An internal grant funded a stipend for a second teaching assistant with similar qualifications and a small stipend for Jessie to facilitate assessment of the course, since the course ran outside the timeframe of her annual contract.

This design enabled the College Writing Program, in collaboration with Elon Academy, to examine students' progress towards meeting the ENG 110 shared objectives in the modified summer section, using the program's existing indirect and direct assessment measures. Additionally, the project used other qualitative measures, including teaching journals, writing consultant logs, and participant interviews, to examine the impact of the five-week timeline and the additional writing workshop hours. A primary goal of these assessments and the data collection was to assess how well the modified course structure supported students' achievement of the learning outcomes and the viability of this course structure for broader implementation in future summers. Although the Academy graduates are not representative of the first-year Elon University student population (which is much less economically and ethnically diverse), developing a summer ENG 110 that successfully adapted to the logistical needs and academic scaffolding needs of this specific group could inform future non-Academy summer sections of ENG 110. In previous summer sections of ENG 110, the non-Academy students enrolled in the course often have struggled to balance other time commitments (e.g., work, athletics, etc.) and have entered the course with lingering apprehensions about previous writing experiences. Additionally, Elon has recently committed to further diversifying its campus, including new programs and scholarship funding for first generation and limited-income students. While the Academy students could not be said to be truly representative of Elon as it was in 2010, they do reflect an increasing number of students matriculating at Elon. Therefore, we hypothesized that a successful Academy summer section of 110 could inform future non-Academy summer sections. We also wanted to identify other outcomes that might be a byproduct of this experience for Academy graduates.

In the following sections, we extend our discussion of the students we enrolled; share our course design, research methods, and primary results; and offer reflections on and recommendations for designing transitional writing courses for underrepresented students, based on our experiences.

Understanding Our Students

The first cohort of Elon Academy graduates were offered the opportunity to take this special extended section of ENG 110 in summer 2010 for transfer credit to their chosen universities, including Elon. Eleven of 22 graduates chose to participate. The class included five males and six females, a diverse mixture of racial backgrounds (six African American, three Hispanic, and two Euro-American), a wide range of prior academic successes and struggles, and a typical trepidation about college-level writing. All but one would be the first in their family to attend college; one would follow in his older sister's footsteps. Three planned to matriculate at Elon in the fall; seven planned to matriculate at other four-year colleges in North Carolina, including East Carolina University, North Carolina A&T University, UNC-Chapel Hill, and Saint Augustine's College; and one planned to attend Alamance Community College for nursing.

The students in our ENG 110 course were very representative of low-income, first-generation students today, a group which is the largest growing segment of the K-12 student population. Almost half of all school children (44 percent) come from low-income families, and these numbers continue to rise. Over 4.5 million low-income, first-generation students are currently enrolled in postsecondary education today, approximately 24 percent of the total undergraduate population (Engle and Tinto). But the statistics for college completion for this group are disturbing, even when controlling for academic achievement levels, with only 29 percent of talented low-income students obtaining their

bachelor's degree, compared to 74 percent of talented high-income students (Fox, Connolly, and Snyder). Access programs can increase the numbers of underrepresented students entering college, but access alone is insufficient.

Once admitted, underrepresented students like the Elon Academy graduates face additional challenges academically, socially, emotionally, and financially during their college career, further increasing the likelihood that these students will be denied a college degree. According to the Pell Institute's report on college success for low-income, first generation students, nearly half leave college without earning their degrees, with 60 percent of those leaving before their second year. During the first year of college, low-income, first-generation students often report that the hidden costs of college can become overwhelming (including costs for books, photocopying, phone calls, and even the means to travel home for holidays and emergencies). Most must learn to balance additional responsibilities alongside their classes, including needing to live off-campus and maintain a paying job. Many find themselves less prepared academically for college-level work and unaware of opportunities for assistance and enrichment offered by colleges, such as writing and tutoring centers and study abroad experiences. Even though high school academic preparation is considered the most significant predictor of college achievement, low-income students, first-generation students, and students of color are disproportionately tracked into less rigorous courses in K-12 schools, leaving them with unaddressed skills deficits despite their high grades (Davis; Strayhorn). The research on persistence for these students is ample and clear. They face barriers their more advantaged peers do not, including financial instability, competing family pressures, cultural mismatch with mainstream student expectations, weaker academic preparation, lack of opportunities to integrate and engage in the campus community, and inefficient or absent advising, among others. The academic barriers are especially significant when it comes to literacy skills, including managing the reading and writing loads, comprehending complex texts across a variety of disciplinary genres, and developing more sophisticated abilities in research and writing (Conley, *Redefining*; Burke). Leaving aside the ethics of equity—including higher education's ability to address historic social stratification and economic inequalities –these numbers alone suggest that underserved populations deserve special attention by higher education faculty and officials.

The Elon Academy students enrolled in the summer ENG 110 section brought the full range of these challenges to the classroom, balancing work, care for siblings, and other family responsibilities alongside their class assignments. Notably, they also brought the more positive hallmarks of underrepresented students, including excitement about college, desire to succeed, and a rich diversity of life experiences (Alvez). They chose to participate in the course for a variety of reasons and entered with a wide range of attitudes and expectations. Some felt acceptably strong in their skills and looked forward to delving deeper into this strength; some loathed writing and just wanted to "get the class [out] of the way" before their freshman year; others believed they might have a higher chance of success in a college class supported by the familiar college access program and "because of the resources available" that might not exist at their future schools. All of them recognized the opportunity to earn free college credit as a tangible financial benefit, especially given the cost of a regular Elon summer session course (waived for these summer section students by Elon as in-kind support for the Academy).

Their participation in the comprehensive college access program certainly filled some of the college knowledge gaps, encouraged improvements in their academic preparation, and helped students mediate obvious financial barriers for this particular experience, but the Elon Academy graduates were still strangers to the higher expectations of a college classroom and inexperienced in some of the behaviors that would foster success in this new environment—from the appropriate ways to interact with faculty and teaching assistants to the elevated standards for organization, study habits, written work, and research.

Designing an Extended Summer Section of First-Year Writing for Underrepresented Students

As a summer transitional course initially proposed by the college access and success program for implementation within another program (the first-year writing program), the Academy summer section reflected some dual-enrollment challenges, even though it was not a dual-enrollment course. Because the summer option was geared toward pre-college students completing the Academy but tapping into the writing program's existing first-year course, the programs had to negotiate mutually agreeable goals, accountability, and assessment plans (Anson; Farris); tension between earning credit and learning rhetorically-grounded writing strategies (Hansen); and questions about the economic incentive overshadowing whether students are adequately prepared for future college writing (Schwalm). Attentive to these challenges, we negotiated the parameters under which the course would run, meet the expectations of the first-year writing program, and thus carry the first-year writing course's designator (i.e., ENG 110). As the writing program administrator, Jessie agreed to support the Academy's summer section staffing request (Paula), since Paula was an established ENG 110 instructor with a record of success supporting the course objectives. In turn, Kim, as the Academy representative, agreed to participate in a research project that would extend the standard ENG 110 program assessment (described more below) and collect additional data to inform decisions about offering the Academy summer section beyond the initial pilot.

At the same time, we focused our course design on helping our specific student population achieve the course goals. Research on the experiences of low-income students in higher education emphasizes the need for additional academic support, personal advising, and ongoing financial assistance (Alvez). In designing the ENG 110 summer course, we also incorporated strategies for promoting academic success as described in Engle and Tinto's research analysis:

- attentive monitoring of student progress;
- well-aligned, highly visible support for developmental learning needs;
- use of proven pedagogical practices in the classroom that foster active student engagement and learning (to better capitalize on the limited time students spend on campus); and
- clear commitment to student success at the institutional level.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, pedagogical and institutional practices which best serve underrepresented students also serve other students equally well, no matter their socio-economic, racial/ethnic backgrounds, or prior academic strengths and weaknesses.

With our understanding of who the Academy graduates were, and drawing on scholarship from both writing studies and college success for underrepresented students, we focused on two major modifications to our previous summer section design: extending the length of the course and adding writing workshop time to the daily schedule. Both adjustments extended the contact hours for the course, but facilitated different goals and activities. Extending the length of the course gave Paula, the instructor, flexibility to plan longer assignment arcs, enabling more focus on and practice of writing process strategies. Adding writing workshops ensured that all students had access to a computer outside of class time and facilitated small-group and one-on-one interactions with the course teaching assistants. With these adjustments, the summer section met for three hours each morning, and students attended the writing workshop for two hours each afternoon after lunch (also funded for students via a small stipend).

An Overview of the Class

While supporting the shared course objectives (listed above), Paula attempted to engage students in mapping their own paths through first-year writing and connecting their experiences in the course to their previous academic and Elon Academy experiences, as well as to their future academic experiences, adopting a "Maps, Legends, and Signs" theme for the section. The course design, from the theme to the scaffolding of assignments to the daily agenda, was mindful of the transitional nature of the summer section for the Elon Academy graduates (see the section syllabus in Appendix 2 [#appendix2]).

An *individual research project and presentation* required students to investigate the first-year writing requirement at the college or university they would be attending and to present their findings to the class; as part of that assignment, students drafted, revised, and sent a *formal e-mail* to someone affiliated with a writing program at their future school in order to learn more about the program. Next, students wrote a *personal essay* analyzing significant moments in their path to college; this assignment was designed not only to tap into the students' rich lived experience, but to give students extensive practice in process strategies, including drafting, revising, and editing. A *critical analysis essay* moved students' subject matter from self to text, and required students to summarize and analyze scholarly texts related to the course theme. Finally a *research essay* prompted students to extend their research and develop an argument related to the theme. There was no time for students to create a new research project from start to finish, so this assignment was purposely designed to grow out of the previous course material, as well as to teach students how to handle the pressure associated with learning under a time constraint. In fact, in end-of-course reflections, two students even mentioned how finding out they *could* write a pretty good research paper in a short period of time might help them in future classes.

Students also created personal *blogs* and contributed to a class blog, a requirement that allowed students to practice reflecting and communicating with their peers, professor, and teaching assistants in an electronic medium. Students used their personal blogs both to create scholarly identities and to showcase their work from the semester, including a final reflective essay in which they explained and used evidence from their work to illustrate how their writing expertise developed over the course of the term. The class blog functioned throughout the course as a shared space for discussion; at the end of the course, students practiced digital literacy skills by revising their research essay (originally formatted as a traditional written text) into a multimedia Web 2.0 text posted to the class blog.

Daily agendas varied across the arc of the course, but students often had reading and a written response due at the start of class. The daily homework assignments were purposely rigorous—reading assignments averaged 15 pages, and writing assignments averaged 2-3 pages—to prepare students for the pace and work required at the college level and, more importantly, to foster persistence, or "the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects" (*Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*). Research indicates that students learn more when faculty have high, clearly articulated expectations, and that students in classes that require a significant amount of both reading and writing invest more time into their classes and develop better critical thinking and writing skills as a result of "High Impact Practices" (*Framework;* NSSE). Instead of being a challenge, the length of the class period and the daily class meetings allowed Paula to create and deploy a variety of active learning activities, as well as provide frequent oral and written feedback that she often does not make or have time for in a regular semester. The first part of class was devoted to discussion of the reading. After a short break, students had time to complete guided work in support of their individual assignments or complete group activities that extended the earlier discussion. Daily activities introduced key terms—rhetorical situation, audience, purpose, conventions, etc.—and prompted

students to apply their understanding of these concepts. As the term progressed, discussions often were interspersed with more small group and writing process activities.

An Overview of the Writing Workshop

The writing workshop was described to students as "designed to enhance your writing performance. The course teaching assistants will be available for writing conferences as you complete the course assignments. You also will be able to use this time to access computers and campus resources, as well as to complete your homework." It was intended to substitute for the Writing Center, which is not open during the summer; to provide students with additional structured practice with process activities under the guidance of English teacher licensure majors who had completed Writing Center training; and to offer time, space, and computer access for students to complete their assignments.

Jessie and Kim anticipated that the daily two-hour writing workshops also would facilitate the implementation of strategies outlined by Engle and Tinto, particularly monitoring student progress and following disciplinary best practices, by integrating additional opportunities for feedback through regular conferences with Paula and the teaching assistants during the writing workshops. We hoped that writing workshops would provide a venue for scaffolding the development of students' strategies for eliciting feedback, tailoring writing instruction to each individual student, and motivating students (Harris). If Academy graduates struggled with organization, the writing workshops would be a space to help students focus their drafts, learn to compose reader-based texts, and experiment with transitions—all with the support of a more experienced student writer (Trupe). We expected that the writing workshops might, as Stephen North envisions in "Revisiting 'The Idea of a Writing Center,'" present a situation in which Paula, the teaching assistants (as writing consultants), and student writers could really get to know each other and talk repeatedly about writing and about college.

Paula and the teaching assistants implemented minor changes as the term progressed to keep the students on track and to move them along in their practice or learning of course concepts during the required two hours of workshop time, resulting in the following workshop activities:

1. *Individual conferences with the course instructor*. Each week, Paula met with each student for at least 20 minutes during workshop time. These conferences, which took place in her faculty office rather than in the classroom, allowed her to spend one-on-one time with each student outside of the regular classroom, show the students how to interact with a professor during office hours, get and provide feedback on how the class was going, work with students on their current assignment, and very simply, get them out of the classroom for a while.
2. *Individual consultations with the teaching assistants*. Each week, the students also met with each teaching assistant at least once to discuss a writing project. These consultations were scheduled so that students knew at what point in the workshop they would need to be prepared to discuss their writing and so that they could manage their time before and after the consultations. In addition, students completed "writing consultation forms," similar to those used in the University Writing Center, in which they indicated the feedback they sought on their work or the questions they had about the assignment.
3. *Small tasks for which there was no time in class or that would jumpstart homework or the next day's class*. The students completed these tasks, such as commenting on the class discussion board or posting on the class blog, at the beginning of the workshop, which seemed to help them transition back into a work mode after taking a break for lunch.
4. *Collaborative work*. The workshop proved to be an ideal environment for students to collaborate and provide feedback on one another's work.

The course focused on Elon's goals for first-year writing classes, but it also served Elon Academy's goals for students in transition to college—maintaining academic skills across the summer months, developing a more sophisticated toolkit of academic literacies, inspiring critical thinking and metacognition about their journey toward and into college, and raising student awareness (and, for many, confidence) in their ability to belong and be successful on a college campus. It served not only as a writing development opportunity, but as a key transition experience to help bridge students into the world of real college classrooms, expectations, and responsibilities.

Assessing the Summer Section

Our study used a mixed-methods approach to assess the outcomes of the modified summer section. Our ongoing program assessments include both an indirect assessment, an online survey of students' participation in activities that support the shared objectives (see Appendix 3 [#appendix3]), and a direct assessment of students' writing samples, paired with their reflections on their writing processes and rhetorical choices. The direct assessment is scored using an internally developed rubric keyed to the course objectives and to the university's related general education goals (see Appendix 4 [#appendix4]).

Paula and the teaching assistants kept journals, and we collected all student work for the course. Jessie and Kim conducted focus groups with the students and the teaching assistants, as well as interviews with Paula.

Learning Outcomes

Looking at our program assessment data described above, the impact on student learning was mixed. Students scored higher than the previous academic-year 110 averages for articulating their understanding of their own writing processes, but lower on the two other outcomes currently evaluated by our direct assessment (see Table 1). This trend holds when we average the first summer (2010) assessment results with those from a subsequent pilot.{2} [#note2] The assessments are on a five-point scale, with a score of five reflecting excellent work.

Goal	Standard Semester, Overall Average for 2008-2011	Summer Elon Academy Average for 2010	Summer Elon Academy Average for 2011
Articulates an understanding of his/her own writing process	3.77	4	3.82
Displays a sophisticated understanding of the relationships between purpose, audience, and voice	3.73	3.45	3.63

Supports own ideas by selecting, using, and properly documenting relevant and credible resources	3.63	3.18	3.04

Given the design of the course, we are not surprised that students excelled at the writing process outcome. The course structure emphasized self-assessment and peer- and instructor-feedback; it also integrated time for revision and intensive activities for practicing writing process strategies. Further, the class environment enabled at least one student to feel comfortable throwing out a "completed" draft and starting over to better meet the goals of an assignment. Overall, class activities and frequent opportunities for students to reflect on the strategies they were trying led to an emphasis on writing process, so end-of-term assessment results showing that students excelled in this area are not surprising.

For this group of students, that emphasis also was probably a strength of the course. None of the students were identified as needing the program's developmental writing course, based on our placement rubric, but most had a different starting point than their eventual peers. Based on our familiarity with the students' high school writing experiences and on their early reflections about their writing processes, we knew they entered the first-year writing course with a narrower range of experiences with writing process strategies than most students who matriculate into the first-year writing program. As a result, for this group of students, and particularly for those students moving on to universities with two-course, first-year writing sequences, the modified summer section likely adequately prepared them for their future writing instruction. The course helped them hone writing process strategies that worked for them, while introducing them to rhetorical concepts and research strategies—introductions that might be extended in second semester writing courses. Many students also reported writing process strategies as their more significant "take away" from the course, the insight most likely to be carried into later courses.

For students like those enrolling at Elon who would not have a second semester writing course, we have more reservations. The accelerated summer section, even in its modified form for this collaboration, did not meet our goals for student learning outcomes related to understanding the relationships between purpose, audience, and voice or to selecting, using, and documenting sources. We suspect that students simply need more time to successfully achieve these outcomes, and we can only hope that writing across the curriculum initiatives will inspire pockets of opportunity for students to further develop their rhetorical awareness and rhetorical and information literacy strategies.

Curricular Feedback: Student, Faculty, and Teaching Assistant Experiences

The research and teaching team's conflicting understandings of the writing workshop presented several challenges, which Paula, the teaching assistants, and the Academy graduates repeatedly discussed in focus groups and interviews. Students initially perceived the workshop time as study hall and resented not being recognized (they perceived) as responsible enough to complete the assignments on their own time. In a mid-term focus group, students told Jessie, "When I'm trying to write, I don't like people hovering over me, reading what I'm saying," and "It feels like I'm in pre-K or something." In addition, the teaching assistants' multiple roles in the summer program{3} [#note3] and their close proximity to the students' ages led to students challenging the teaching assistants' expertise, potentially undermining the teaching assistants' efforts to offer mini-lessons and activities on writing technologies, writing process strategies, and related topics. Focus group sessions held

during the workshop time also highlighted other topics for the faculty member, teaching assistants, and students to negotiate: tolerance for regional diversity{4} [#note4], expectations for rigor in a university class, expectations for in-class interactions, and uses/misuses of technology.

As the summer term progressed, frank discussions among all participants about competing expectations led to a happier balance of scheduled writing center-style consultations and time to work on assignments, with more flexibility regarding where students worked and how they used the time. Despite the initial struggles regarding this component of the course, several students recognized its necessity, with one commenting in our final focus group, "For me, I *need* workshop time because I really don't have internet at home. Some of our stuff required internet for research." For this reason, several students indicated they missed the workshop when Paula cancelled it during the last week of class; not having access to the internet and other technology resources created anxiety for students who depended on the workshop time for that access. Another student expressed appreciation for the conferences with Paula, noting, "It helped me be more focused with what I actually need help with… instead of just saying, 'Oh, check this.'" Students also had impromptu lessons on representative qualifying/training programs for writing center consultants, rich discussions about types of diversity, and eye-opening experiences with the default lack of privacy in many social media platforms. All of these experiences inform the reflections and recommendations we share at the end of this article.

Despite our concerns about the course's writing-related learning outcomes, we did note another noteworthy outcome: access to more foundational college capital. Students learned about the benefits of attending class, the challenges of being responsible for deadlines, and how to self-monitor. They also gained experience interacting with college classmates, with their professor, and awareness of how communication both in class and via electronic means could alter their college experiences. Most significantly, students repeatedly commented on navigating their new-found independence. In a mid-term focus group, students told Jessie, "We're not children. We know when to work," and "It's our decision whether we want to do this work or not." While the program strove to monitor student progress (Engle and Tinto), students wanted both a recognition of their independence and the freedom to make mistakes—including college experience mistakes. For the Elon Academy's larger goals, this alone made the ENG 110 experience worthwhile. As one student said in our final focus group, the length expectations for papers surprised her, and "the reading was pretty intense, sometimes… This one class was kicking my butt for a while. It's not like it wasn't doable. It was just I didn't want to do it sometimes, like some of the homework assignments. Since we had to get them in, you had to stay focused." Students grew in their academic literacy skills, but also began developing the skills and dispositions of successful college students—learning to better navigate the classroom and other college resources (including TAs, writing centers, office hours, and available technology), balancing their time and external responsibilities, and growing their individual levels of confidence and sense of belonging in the college environment.

Reflections and Recommendations

As program administrators, we had several take-aways that informed a revised pilot summer section of first-year writing for Elon Academy students and that will influence Elon Academy's decisions about future transitional experiences.

Faculty must be able to relate to and engage with underrepresented students. We recognized early on that faculty selection was key to successful outcomes, and Paula went above and beyond to connect with students. She displayed genuine interest in their success, excelled at accentuating positive outcomes, and ensured that students understood what they needed to do differently in the future when the outcomes were not successful. Jessie and Kim believe that her commitment to the first-year writing course objectives and her willingness to learn more about the unique needs of

underrepresented students were key to the course's success in fostering students' development of personalized writing processes and their access to college capital. The confidence to approach a college professor for help with writing assignments, no doubt facilitated by Paula's accessibility, is itself a powerful outcome for the experience.

Even well prepared teaching assistants benefit from additional training. We erringly assumed that our undergraduate teaching assistants would transfer their Writing Center experiences and writing studies and education knowledge to their writing consultations as teaching assistants. Initially, our teaching assistants did not make the connections between their Writing Center coursework and consulting experiences and their roles assisting in the ENG 110 classroom and facilitating the writing workshop, in part because we were exposing them to a student group with whom they had minimal previous experience and in part because they, too, were still learning how to support writing in a classroom and would not have full-fledged teaching experiences to draw from until later in their senior year. The teaching assistants were most successful in planning and leading instruction, the knowledge for which they had developed in their prior coursework (one TA, in fact, chose to create a unit for this summer course to fulfill an assignment in a course she took the preceding spring). For example, one teaching assistant developed and taught a unit on writing for blogs, while the other teaching assistant developed and taught a unit on organizing research materials. However, the teaching assistants had a more difficult time managing the less-structured workshop time. Therefore, any summer section that integrates teaching assistants should actively facilitate their transfer of prior knowledge from writing studies courses and Writing Center consulting experience, while also extending their knowledge base through additional professional development, such as working with the course instructor to plan specific activities and develop classroom management strategies.

All participants need to engage in discussions about class and workshop structures and their alignment with pedagogical scholarship. Everyone involved—program administrators, the faculty member, and the teaching assistants—needed to be clearer about what the writing workshop was supposed to do. As administrators, Jessie and Kim thought all participants were philosophically aligned with writing center scholarship for what we anticipated would be a prominent writing consultation component in the writing workshops. Yet, initially, the workshop fostered more disengaged learning, with students identifying it as a "study hall" that they resented. Eventually, the workshop time aligned more closely with the intended disciplinary pedagogy, utilizing more supportive and engaging writing consultations, but it took us a while to get there because we had not recognized we were starting with different, unspoken conceptions of how the workshop time would be used.

The programs' assessment and research process built in opportunities for reflection that should be integral to transitional experiences. By participating in focus groups, students had opportunities to reflect on the course as a college experience and to share their study strategies. As students voiced their own strategies for and reflections on the class, their peers often made note of practices to try in the future. For instance, students often shared time management strategies that they found effective, while others identified study locations that they would keep in mind as alternatives to their dorm rooms. We recommend intentionally integrating opportunities for these types of shared college capital reflections to best support underrepresented (and all) students, perhaps as part of end-of-assignment reflection activities.

Longer days might not be tenable for summer transition experiences, regardless of the student population. If we were to repeat this program, or a summer section of first-year writing for any student population, we would opt for an even longer term, rather than longer days, and we might alternate class days and writing workshop days. The long days (five hours, plus a lunch break which

most students took with their class peers) left everyone exhausted, and the hyper-structured days did not allow for the independent college experience that students were (appropriately) envisioning.

Transportation needs present significant challenges. We underestimated the challenges presented by our students' transportation needs. While this may seem disconnected from the practices of the first year writing classroom, such struggles are central to many underrepresented students' college experiences. The teaching assistants understandably found their dual-role of teaching assistant and transportation provider challenging. We had recruited the teaching assistants as respondents and co-teachers with an expectation of also serving as driver, but driving students to and from campus devalued their disciplinary knowledge and writing center experience in the eyes of the students—even as it improved the teaching assistants' understanding of the students' lives, interests, and issues (a natural outgrowth of the conversations that happened while traveling). While budget limitations during the first summer necessitated this dual-role, we recommend separating these responsibilities.

For students, the transportation route also meant that they spent an exorbitant amount of time in a van (sometimes up to 2 hours), when they would have preferred to work on homework or needed to tend to siblings or meet job responsibilities. These types of details, while not often part of writing program administrators' responsibilities, can impact significantly the outcomes of transitional courses for underrepresented students.

Overall, we are pleased with the experience we provided for the students in the summer pilot sections of the first-year writing course, even though we have not resolved all the challenges of offering accelerated sections or addressed all of the myriad needs common to underrepresented students. We recognize a need to rethink which learning outcomes faculty emphasize in an accelerated summer section, but for this student group, the heavy emphasis on writing process served many of them well. Furthermore, the opportunity to participate in a more deliberately scaffolded first college course helped them gain important college capital as they prepared to matriculate into their university programs. Rather than beginning college with a more limited understanding about expectations and lifestyle than their more affluent, more experienced peers, these students begin college with a successful classroom experience already completed and clearer sense of their personal strengths and areas of challenge in a higher education environment as well as in college-level writing. They reported being far more likely to communicate with faculty, to use TAs as resources, and to seek assistance in general—behaviors often linked to success in higher education for underrepresented (and for all) students. As apparent in one student's final reflection, students looked forward to their first fall semester in college with increased confidence, based on real experiences and self-reflection, and able to envision themselves as college students in more concrete and meaningful ways—an important foundational achievement for their future success: "Weeks before I had even set foot in the class, I caught myself doubting my writing abilities. I thought the worst of the class before it even began, but that was because I feared the level of work expected. I wasn't sure I could deliver college-level work … I am happy to say now that my strength is developing new and bright ideas that can be discussed from several different angles … After taking this class, the lessons I will take with me are trust in your abilities, take responsibility for your work, and … never be afraid to ask for help."

Appendices

Appendix 1: College Writing/ENG 110 Objectives and Shared Experiences Document

Objectives for English 110/College Writing

College Writing is a requirement for all students, and it is one of the four courses that comprise the First-Year Core. Since it is a cornerstone and prerequisite for most courses at Elon, students take it either in the fall or spring semesters of their first year.

The course helps students develop as writers through extensive practice in prewriting, drafting, and revising, and prepares them for writing across the disciplines and beyond the academy. It is also designed to help students develop and hone argumentative skills, as the majority of the writing is argumentative and/or persuasive. Therefore, College Writing is taught with writing as content, not as a writing-intensive literature course or as a course that uses writing simply to learn some other content. Although there are no departmentalized syllabi for the multi-sections of College Writing, each class shares common objectives and all students gain common experiences.

Objectives

(All sections of College Writing aim to develop the following)

- A more sophisticated writing process—including invention, peer responding, revising and editing—that results in a clear, effective, well edited public piece

- A more sophisticated understanding of the relationship of purpose, audience, and voice, and an awareness that writing expectations and conventions vary within the academy and in professional and public discourse

- An appreciation for the capacity of writing to change oneself and the world

In order to achieve the above objectives, English 110 will give students the following experiences:

- Writing to persuade by analyzing, interpreting, researching, synthesizing, and evaluating a wide variety of sources

- Writing to academic audiences, writing to non-academic audiences, and writing for one's own purposes

- Writing on the spot (determining the audience and purpose of given writing situations)

- Opportunities for oral presentation of their work/writing (i.e. in-class presentations)

Consistency in College Writing

- The majority of the writing in English 110 is argumentative/persuasive
- Credit for process is no more than one-third of a student's grade
- Courses addressing a single theme or topic are the exception, rather than the norm and (1) the professor should notify the chair and the College Writing coordinator when he/she is going to offer a special topics course and (2) notify students in advance of the special topic
- College Writing is taught with writing as content, not as a writing-intensive literature course or as a course that uses writing simply to learn some other content

Appendix 2: Syllabus (Excerpts) for Elon Academy Summer Section of ENG 110

ENG 110: College Writing

Summer 2010

M-F 8:30-11:30amCarlton 321

Writing Workshop hours: M-F 1:00-3:00 p.m.

The Writing Workshop is designed to enhance your writing performance. The course teaching assistants will be available for writing conferences as you complete the course assignments. You will also be able to use this time to access computers and campus resources, as well as to complete your homework. Attendance at the workshops is the same as the course attendance policy (described below).

Required Texts

- Bullock & Goggin, *The Norton Field Guide to Writing with Readings and Handbook*, 2nd ed., 2010. This text has an online site available at wwnorton.com/write/fieldguide.
- [] []Orienting Reading (this will provide the metaphorical framework for things we do in the course): Essays on Signs and Maps from slate.com [http://www.slate.com/id/2245644/]. We will read Parts 1, 2, 4, and 6, as well as this essay [http://www.slate.com/id/2252161/pagenum/all/] on hand-drawn maps.

Maps, Legends, and Signs

[]In architecture, urban planning, and seafaring, the concept of "wayfinding" is understood to mean the strategies that people use to navigate or orient themselves in new and unfamiliar surroundings. For centuries, people have used maps, signs, and legends to both "find their way" and "point the way" to and from places, a process that can be applied metaphorically to what will happen in our writing class this summer. This intensive Summer Term section of English 110: College Writing will focus on how in writing, we use rhetoric and process to map and find our way or lead others in the right direction. As Elon Academy alumni, you will be asked to think about where you've been and where you're going—providing an "I Am Here" placemark every so often to let your peers and former instructors know what you're experiencing in those new places. And we want to create a map for those who follow you: other Elon Academy classes, your siblings, your friends, your classmates, your neighbors. How can they get to where you are or to where you are going? In what directions would you point them? From what obstacles or perils might you warn them to steer clear?

We'll be able to discuss and write about all of these things in relation to the following **course objectives**:

- A more sophisticated writing process including invention, peer responding, revising and editing that result in a clear, effective well edited public piece.
- A more sophisticated understanding of the relationship of purpose, audience, and voice, and an awareness that writing expectations and conventions vary within the academy and in professional and public discourse.

- An appreciation for the capacity of writing to change oneself and the world.

To achieve these objectives, you will have the following kinds of **learning experiences**:

1. Write to persuade by analyzing, interpreting, researching, synthesizing, and evaluating a wide variety of resources.
2. Understand how to approach a variety of writing assignments.
3. Read and understand writing assignment documents.
4. Make decisions about how to approach particular writing situations based on the context and your preferences as a writer.
5. Understand and adapt to the differences in style, purpose, audience, and context when writing in different academic disciplines, in public and professional writing, and in informal and personal writing.
6. Manage large writing and research assignments.
7. Manage timed or "on-the-spot" writing assignments.
8. Be an engaged and reflective writer and reader.
9. Reflect on who you are as a writer, including your writing process, your strengths and weaknesses, and your ability to set and meet personal writing goals.
10. Respond to college-level reading assignments in a sophisticated manner.
11. Offer and receive effective, constructive feedback about writing.
12. Revise and edit your writing, and the writing of others, applying grammar, style, and citation concepts appropriate to the writing situation.
13. Conduct library and online research, and use source material to support an argument.
14. Apply MLA/APA style requirements and documentation to your writing.
15. Select, evaluate, synthesize, and integrate outside sources into your writing.
16. Present your ideas orally.

Assignments

Because of the intensive nature of the course, you should be prepared to work at a rapid pace. You will be writing every day and will usually have something due each class session. The course calendar and detailed information about each assignment are available on Blackboard.

Formal projects (55-60% of total course grade)

These formal projects are designed to teach you and allow you to practice and, especially, refine skills associated with the course goals and experiences. Work on these assignments will take place both in and out of class and over the course of several days. The products of these projects must be carefully edited and proofread—like Mary Poppins, practically perfect in every way.

1. Individual Research Project and Presentation: College Writing Where You're Going (*5% of course grade*). This assignment will require you to research the writing requirements, courses, and assignments at your chosen college, and present your findings to your classmates via an 8-10 minute presentation.
2. Formal E-mail (*5%*). As part of the College Writing Where You're Going assignment, you will create and refine a formal e-mail to send to someone affiliated with some aspect of writing at the college.
3. Personal Essay (*15%*). This assignment will ask you to personalize the course theme, analyzing significant moments on the road to college and beyond. The final product will be posted to your blog.

4. Critical Analysis Essay (*10%*). This assignment will require you to summarize, analyze, and develop an argument in response to a scholarly text related to our course theme to your research project.
5. Research Essay (*20%*). The product of this project will be a traditional academic research paper. The topic will be related to our course theme and/or something you wrote about in your personal essay.

*In-class activities (15%)*In-class activities will function as informal writing projects (more concerned with practice than with perfection) and will usually be completed over one or two class periods, either individually or in groups. These activities will be graded according to the requirements of each activity (e.g., for application of concepts taught in class related to the activity, for ability to collaborate in a group) and will include, among others, the following:

- A group project in which you will work in small groups to evaluate the reliability of a Wikipedia article. You will present this evaluation as an argument, written collaboratively by all members of your group.
- A comparison of your writing to the writing of a student who has completed his or her first year of college, a college senior, a professional writer, and/or a scholarly writer.
- Illustrating an argument. You will examine how illustrations or visuals can be argumentative texts and how they can enhance a written text; you will also create a short illustrated text.

Class blog posts (10%). For each class meeting (after the first week), you will create a blog post, usually in response to a prompt provided by Prof. Patch or one of the teaching assistants and usually related to that day's reading assignment or to the project we're working on at the time.

Blog/Electronic Portfolio (10%)

Your blog will be the electronic home for the products of your formal writing projects, daily posts, and informal activities. Each of these products will receive a separate grade, as explained in above. Along with posting your projects and activities, you will create

- A blog design

- An About Me page that explains who you are

- And, at the end of the course, a self-assessment of the blog contents—basically, an assessment of your work over the course of the semester

All of the above blog contents will be graded for thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and correctness.

Final Exam (*5%* of grade).

On the last day of class, you will write an in-class essay on a topic to be provided later in the course. This exam will assess your ability to draft, revise, and edit an argumentative under a time constraint.

Active course participation and preparation (*~5%*).

Much of our coursework will be completed in class; homework assignments will prepare you for this in-class work *or* give you chance to complete work begun in class. I expect you to come to class prepared to actively engage and participate in all class activities, both individually and in groups. Your participation/preparation grade will include the following:

- completion of homework (other than blog posts) and drafts.
- participation in peer response/review. Each major project and some of the in-class activities will go through the peer review process.
- completion of activities related to formal projects.
- completion of note-taking duties. Each day, two students will be responsible for taking notes on class lecture, discussion, and activities. See details about this on Blackboard.
- contribution to class discussion.

Grading

A grade of "C-" or higher is required to pass ENG 110. This is a graduation requirement. Successful completion of the course is also a prerequisite for all other English courses.

Special Information about Research Activities

This class is part of a research project on the effectiveness of time-intensive courses for teaching writing. At the beginning of the semester, you (or your parent or guardian, if you are not yet 18) will be asked to sign a permission form, indicating whether or not you will participate in the study. If you give your permission, some of the work you do in this class will be used to assess the effectiveness of learning writing in a shortened course. I won't know if you have or have not given permission for your work to be included in the study until after the final grades have been posted, so there is no way that your participation or lack of participation in the study can help or hinder you performance in this class. Regardless of your decision to participate, you will still do the same work as the rest of the class. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this research.

Appendix 3: Program Assessment—Students' Perceptions of Class Activities

At the end of each semester, students enrolled in ENG 110 receive an email invitation to participate in an online survey about their ENG 110 activities. The survey includes three parts:

Part One

Question: How well were the Course Objectives explained to you at the beginning of the term?

Choices: They were never explained, Briefly explained, Fairly well explained, Very well explained

Part Two

The next set of questions uses the following response choices for each question: Never, Very Little, Some, Quite a bit, Very Often

Questions:

- How often did you engage in invention strategies (i.e., clustering, freewriting, listing, brainstorming, etc.) both in and outside your ENG 110 class this semester?
- How often did you engage in drafting strategies (i.e., writing a workable plan, writing an outline, writing one or more rough drafts, overcoming procrastination, organizing and developing ideas, paragraph development, etc.) both in and outside your ENG 110 class this semester?

- How often did you engage in revising strategies (i.e., identifying features that require revision, writing a revision plan, developing a way to deal with responses from peers or writing center consultants, highlighting different sections/topics…
- How often did you engage in peer-response both in and outside your ENG 110 class this semester?
- How often did you engage in editing strategies (identifying features that require editing, practicing different editing strategies, etc.) both in and outside your ENG 110 class this semester?
- How often did you write argumentative papers, assignments, or activities?
- How often did you write papers, assignments, or activities that required research (library, database, interviews, etc.)?
- How often did you write papers, assignments, or activities that required you to use documentation suited to audience, purpose, and context (i.e., MLA, APA, in-text citations, Bibliographies, Works Cited)?
- How often did you produce texts or engage in activities that helped you develop an awareness that writing expectations and conventions vary within the academy and in professional and public discourse?
- How often were the Course Objectives emphasized throughout the term?

Part Three

The next set of questions offers the following response choices: Never, Very little, Some, Quite a bit, Very much.

Question: How often did you engage in each of the following activities?

Listed Activities: Brainstorming, Clustering, Freewriting, Considering your subject from multiple perspectives, Outlining, Listing, Writing a workable plan, Writing an outline, Writing one or more rough drafts, Overcoming procrastination, Organizing and developing ideas, Developing paragraphs, Identifying features that require revision, Writing a revision plan, Visiting the Writing Center as a requirement, Visiting the Writing Center on your own, Reading paper out loud, Developing a strategy for incorporating responses from peers or writing center consultants, Highlighting specific sections/topics in a text with different colors, Participating in peer-response, Discussed how to give peers useful responses, Read peer's paper and responded to questions asked by peer, Read peer's paper and responded to questions given to you by instructor, Read and responded to a peer's paper digitally/online, Identifying weaknesses in your own writing that often require editing, Editing sentences for clarity of meaning, Editing sentences for readability, Editing sentences for conciseness, Editing grammar, Editing punctuation, Editing diction (word choice)

Appendix 4: Program Assessment—Direct Assessment Rubrics

College Writing Direct Assessment Rubrics

The student articulates an understanding of his/her own writing process, including an ability to revise work based on self-assessments and peer, instructor, and/or Writing Center consultant feedback. (Writing skills)

Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

1	2	3	4	5
Unable to articulate own writing process in reflection	Limited articulation of own writing process in reflection	Moderate articulation of own writing process in reflection	Moderate articulation—and some evaluation—of own writing process	Demonstrates qualitative evaluation and excellent articulation of own writing process in reflection
No ability to integrate feedback into new drafts, or unwilling to consider feedback/advice	Limited ability to integrate feedback into new drafts; primarily service-level revisions	Attempts to integrate some feedback into new draft, but minimal deep revision	Integrates feedback into new draft, with moderate deep revision	Extensive use of feedback to guide deep revisions
Unable or unwilling to take responsibility for own rhetorical decisions/revisions	Limited understanding of rhetorical concepts at play in own work and writing process	Good grasp of basic rhetorical concepts at play in own work and writing process	Good grasp of basic rhetorical concepts at play in own work and writing process and experiments with advanced rhetorical strategies	Understands advanced rhetorical concepts at play in own work and writing process and consistently employs advanced rhetorical strategies

Student's work reflects a sophisticated understanding of the relationships between purpose, audience, and voice. (Writing skills)

Poor 1	Below Average 2	Average 3	Good 4	Excellent 5
Reader cannot identify the purpose.	Reader can discern possible purposes, but not a single defining purpose.	Reader can discern the writer's purpose with careful reading.	Reader can discern the writer's purpose.	Purpose is readily apparent.

Intended audience is unclear.	Intended audience is inappropriate for the stated or perceived purpose; the writer misjudges the content necessary for the audience and purpose.	The writer targets an appropriate audience and attempts to select content that is appropriate for the audience/purpose.	The writer is moderately successful at tailoring content and rhetorical choices to an appropriate audience.	The writer critically targets content and rhetorical choices to the appropriate audience's needs.
Lacks identifiable voice.	Uses an inconsistent voice.	Uses an inconsistent, but identifiable, voice.	Uses a consistent voice, with appropriate language/diction.	Uses a consistent voice with highly targeted language/diction.

The student is able to support his/her own ideas by selecting, using, and properly documenting relevant and credible resources. (Information literacy skills)

Poor 1	Below Average 2	Average 3	Good 4	Excellent 5
Student uses inappropriate quotations.	Student uses appropriate quotations, but does not elaborate on or situate the quote within own writing.	Student situates appropriate quotes within own writing, but some quoted sources would be better paraphrased or summarized.	Student selectively situates appropriate quotes within own writing and moderately experiments with paraphrase and summary.	Student selectively integrates appropriate quotes, paraphrases, and summaries within own writing.
Transitions between sources and original voice do not exist.	Limited transitions between sources and original voice.	Transitions between sources and original voice are uneven.	Moderate transitions between sources and original voice.	Seamless transitions between sources and own voice.
Sources are unreliable and irrelevant.	Sources are relevant, but unreliable.	Sources are relevant and	Sources are relevant and credible, but	Uses a variety of credible, relevant sources and

		credible, but not critically evaluated.	inconsistently evaluated.	critically evaluates them.
Documentation does not exist.	Documentation is incomplete and/or does not follow a consistent form.	Documentation follows a consistent form but contains errors.	Documentation follows a consistent form, but contains minor errors.	Practically perfect documentation, demonstrating an understanding of how and why to document sources.

Notes

1. We use "underrepresented" to encompass the many labels that could be applied to our program's students. They are all first-generation college students, and most are racial minority students (African-American or Hispanic). Some are members of the local immigrant communities and the primary speaker of English in their homes, and all come from low-income, working-class families. (Return to text.) [#note1-ref]
2. In 2011, the College Writing Program and Elon Academy partnered on a second summer pilot that reduced the contact hours slightly in comparison to the first pilot and refocused the afternoon writing workshop time as regularly scheduled conferences with the faculty instructor and an undergraduate teaching assistant. We offer the assessment results for this additional pilot to highlight the continuing trend: summer section students outperformed their standard semester peers on articulating their own writing processes, but they continued to perform lower on the other two measured learning outcomes. (Return to text.) [#note2-ref]
3. Both teaching assistants were required to drive the university vans that picked up students and took them home. Due to a lack of public transportation, most students, who lived at home during the summer program, needed rides to campus. The route might take only 20 minutes or, when more students needed transport, could run nearly 2 hours. This logistical issue was an ongoing challenge. (Return to text.) [#note3-ref]
4. Many students initially were put off by one of the teaching assistant's New York personality traits, leading to a discussion of regional differences in word choices, pacing, humor, etc. (Return to text.) [#note4-ref]

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