JOIN THE CONVERSATION : Teaching Students to "Cook": Promoting Writing in the First Year Experience Course

Note: This article is the second of a two-part series. The first article, Teaching Students to "Cook": Promoting Reading in the First Year Experience Course, by Patsy A. Self Trand and Charlene Eberly, was published in the "Join the Conversation" segment of TLAR's Fall 2009 issue 14 (2). That article briefly reviewed the research on the two models of First Year Experience courses and the predominant finding that the learning strategy intervention model produces better retention results than the academic socialization model. Thus, with academics becoming the focus for FYE curriculum, the discussion moved to the importance of critical thinking for academic and professional success and the need to expand instruction in its two primary exponents: reading and writing. Whereas the first article concentrated on critical reading, this article focuses on writing excellence.

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Abstract

This paper is a continuation of a previous article, "Teaching Students to 'Cook': Promoting Reading in the First Year Experience Course," The Learning Assistance Review 14 (2), on the importance of teaching critical thinking through the foundational skills of analytical reading and writing within the First Year Experience (FYE) course. With its vital role in retention, the FYE course must do more than just whet students' academic appetites; it must begin the process of teaching them to "cook" for themselves. This paper promotes the concept of writing excellence and offers specific ways to incorporate it into an FYE class. Descriptions are given for two common writing activities and one new technique, with a sample lesson plan and descriptive statistics from post-lesson surveys of FYE students.

One of the goals of higher education is to promote lifelong learning (Pintrich, McKeachie, & Lin, 1987). Post secondary institutions seek to prepare students for both short-term academic success and a lifetime of intellectual growth and professional success. In pursuit of these goals, institutions must teach critical thinking and its natural exponents:

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critical reading and writing excellence. It is not enough to give students food for thought; they must be taught to "cook" (Trand & Eberly, 2009). In the academy, the First Year Experience (FYE) class is Cooking 101, and every student is a potential master chef.

Yet, to produce gourmet chefs—rather than mere cooks—institutions of higher education must do more than seek to insure that students are well versed in their specific areas of study; academic institutions must see that students are able to make intellectual connections and express and apply their knowledge in real-life situations and contexts. Accordingly, FYE classes are being restructured to add more foundational academic content (Skipper, 2002, as cited in Ryan & Glenn, 2004). Specifically, many FYE courses are being expanded in terms of increased contact or credit hours in order to develop the curriculum in key academic skill areas such as critical reading and advanced writing or writing excellence and to provide opportunities for students to put these skills into practice.

Fortunately for administrators and educators seeking to add reading and writing to the FYE curriculum, this course restructuring is not only possible, but it is also relatively uncomplicated. Reading and writing skills can be taught in any context, directed towards any purpose, and designed for any audience. Metacognitive by nature, both reading and writing can readily be employed within the context of the socialization and the academic orientation of students, the two primary tasks of the FYE class.

The connections between reading and writing are well established, and the line between them is often blurred. "Strong readers tend to be strong writers, and struggling writers are often poor readers" (Griswold, 2006, p. 60). In academic learning or resource centers offering reading and writing tutoring, students often move freely between the reading tutor and writing consultant as they research, read and annotate material, plan papers, and revise them. The recursive nature of the writing process often leads students to return to the research and reading stages as their papers develop. Key to both reading and writing success is critical thinking.

Background

The ability to think critically is a shared goal of both composition and FYE classes. In addition, writing pedagogy emphasizes a holistic approach, which is in line with FYE pedagogy and its focus on both the academic and the social development of students. The reflective nature of writing and the view of writing as a recursive process, not a product, dovetail perfectly with the FYE course's promotion of active learning or learning by inquiry. Asked what the first year of college would have been like if there had not been so much writing, one Harvard freshman summed it up: "If I hadn't written, I would have felt as if I was just being fed a lot of information. My papers are my opportunity to think…" (Sommers and Saltz, 2004, p.128). Writing is more than a way of reporting ideas; it is a way of working out and refining ideas.

Many of the current trends in FYE course design or re-design are aligned with the best practices of the composition classroom. FYE curriculum innovations or renovations include service learning; learning communities; "clustering" or the grouping of courses; frontloading or "putting the strongest,

most student-centered people, programs, and services in the freshman year" (Levitz & Noel, 1989, as cited in Crissman, 2002, p. 138); academic themes; and the facilitation of connections — to faculty, peers, and the institution. Writing lends itself well to these and other FYE methodologies and can be employed in a wide variety of projects —in and out of the classroom. Writing can be on topics related to students' shared majors or larger institutional themes. Not only can composition classes be clustered with FYE classes, they frequently are. Finally, with its emphasis on feedback, the composition classroom provides many opportunities for making connections.

Writing's focus on rhetoric and analysis makes it highly adaptable. Accordingly, writing instruction can be put to work in any number of ways in the FYE classroom. It can be a component of a service learning project, it can be directed towards a common reading or larger academic theme, it can be used to report on an activity, and it can be applied to FYE topics related to academic socialization or extended orientation goals. Activities borrowed from composition classrooms — brainstorming, topic development, and peer review, for example — can serve such FYE goals as fostering critical thinking, promoting learning by inquiry, and facilitating connections. Undergraduate writing programs, writing centers, and centers for pedagogical excellence are all potential resources for FYE instructors looking for assistance in developing writing assignment guidelines and creating appropriate rubrics.

Method

At a large, urban public university in the southeastern United States, several writing activities were incorporated into the FYE class by the instructor who also taught writing at the undergraduate and graduate level and served as the faculty administrator of the university's writing center. Activities included the standard response paper, used in many classes and disciplines including FYE classes; "Going to the Wall," a common activity in the composition classroom; and "Parking Spots," a new method developed by the instructor and refined in the writing center over many years.

Participants

A total of 39 Students from two separate FYE classes participated in this study in the spring and summer semesters of 2009. One FYE course consisted of 19 pre-medical majors (the same group who participated in a reading study). The other FYE course included 20 students from a range of majors. The first group of students was taught the "Parking Spots" technique, and the second group of students participated in the "Going to the Wall" writing activity. Both groups of students completed assessment surveys on their respective writing activities.

Procedure

Writing Assignment: The Response Paper

A fairly common incorporation of writing into the FYE course is the response paper. Students are asked to write a response paper in which they report and reflect on an independent or class activity. When FYE classes are clustered with a freshman composition course — formally, through a Freshman Interest Group (FIG), or informally, through students' independent enrollment in both courses simultaneously—the possibility to

develop the response paper in the English classroom exists. In this scenario, the response paper may even serve as the impetus for an extended writing project. For example, a response paper on a jazz concert could develop into a larger paper on the history of jazz.

With help from the writing center or other writing resources on campus, FYE instructors and students can get assistance to take the response paper assignment from a fairly mundane task to an opportunity to learn beyond the classroom (see sample response paper lesson plan).

Lesson Summary		**Response Paper**
Objectives		
	Content	The students will learn about (the topic or subject) and be able to think and write critically about that subject.
	Social	The students will enhance their knowledge of the social aspects of the general topic or theme (such as collegiate sports or diversity) and be able to think and write critically about the relations between the topic and themselves, other texts, and the world.
	Process	The students will engage in an independent writing activity where they report, analyze, and reflect on the activity and topic.
	Affective	The students will enjoy the experience of learning about the topic, understand its relationship to themselves, other texts, and the world, and appreciate the writing experience.
Procedures		A. Students attend FYE class and participate in discussions about the general activity theme or larger topic. Students are told to keep an activity notebook. B. During the topic presentation, students are encouraged to take notes on the discussion and record their ideas in their notebooks. C. Outside of class, students are to attend the assigned class activity or their choice of activity and record notes and observations. D. As an out-of-class assignment, students are instructed to write a response paper that is (1) a summary of the content of the topic/activity, not to exceed one half the paper and (2) analysis/comments/reflections on the activity, which should comprise the second half. Students are instructed to comment on: • Connections of the major ideas to themselves, texts, and the world. • Applications for change and suggestions for improvement.
Assessment Objective		Were the students able to: • Learn about the topic; • Enhance their knowledge of the social aspects and be able to think and write critically about the relations of the topic to themselves, other texts, and the world; • Engage in the writing process and produce an appropriate and well-written response paper.
Accommodations for second language students/students with language deficiencies, disabilities in writing, or language acquisition.		During the general topic and larger theme presentation, visuals and re-tellings are to be included. To develop possible activity ideas, the "Going to the Wall" activity can be utilized during class discussion.

Figure 1. Sample Response Paper Lesson Plan

Instructors can get help in creating guidelines for the writing assignment and a grading rubric with clear criteria. Students are guided in the process of reflecting on and analyzing the experience; making connections between

the activity and their academic and social lives; structuring the response paper; and expressing their ideas using a formal academic writing style and format. In what can only be seen as icing on the cake, the introduction to the writing center achieves part of the FYE goal of academic socialization or acclimation to the academic environment and the many resources it offers (see Assignment Guidelines).

Assignment Guidelines: Response Paper

Independent Activity: University Art Museum – Self-guided Sculpture Tour*
(*This activity counts as one of your 3 independent activities/university resources for the class.)

Your assignment is to write a 2-page response paper on the art/sculpture you saw. (Exile art piece with people behind bars, silver "windmill"-looking piece, large black cube that moved, large bronze depicting the warped world, and the large piece made by vertical rusty steel beams.)

Your paper should consist of two parts:

Response
A response paper details your "response" to something: in this case, the art. Do not focus on descriptions of the pieces (we all saw them, too), other than what is needed to identify them and to make your points. Some questions that may guide your response include the following: What did you like? What did you not like? What did the art "say" to you? Do you like sculpture? Does it engage you? How do we engage differently with art that we can touch, that is three-dimensional?

Extra points will be awarded for correct / relevant use of the following terms *in relation to the work we saw*: "tactile," "kinetic," "relief," "constructed," "patina," and "element of danger."

Analysis/Synthesis
Go beyond the immediate experience and discuss the sculpture, and its presence in the public venue of your university, from a larger perspective. Some questions that may guide your analysis include the following: Who does art belong to? Why is it important that art be available for public consumption (or why not)? Does art have a meaning or is it just intended to attract, repulse, or stimulate us in some way? If there is meaning, is it determined by the artist or the viewer? Is art primarily a visual experience? Should art be seen and not touched? How does the tactile/physical nature of sculpture affect our response to it? Does it add another dimension of meaning? As three-dimensional beings, do we respond to three-dimensional art differently?
The sky is the limit here. Take your observations, add your analysis, and give us something to think about….

Paper should be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins only, and in a clear readable font like Times New Roman. The top left corner of the page should have your name, the class name, and the date. Give your paper a title that expresses your overall response to sculpture and/or the university's sculpture park at the museum.

Please use appropriate language and proofread your papers thoroughly. Organize the paper so it is not just a bunch of randomly connected responses to the prompt questions or isolated observations.

Figure 2. Assignment Guidelines

For the two methods studied —"Going to the Wall" and "Parking Spots" — students in two separate classes were given instruction in one of the methods followed by in-class practice of the technique with instructor

direction. A post-lesson survey was taken in each class at the next class meeting; students were asked to evaluate the method.

Writing Activity 1: "Going to the Wall"

A popular composition class pre-writing activity designed to help students develop paper topics that are high interest, scale and scope appropriate, and accessible in terms of research realities is often referred to as "Going to the Wall." The "Going to the Wall" writing activity can be used whether the final outcome is an individual paper or a class paper, project, or presentation. Topics can be assigned or chosen by the students. An active learning experience, "Going to the Wall" involves students putting rough topic ideas on large sheets of paper affixed to the classroom wall. With markers in hand, students move around the room and list questions and comments relative to the various topics on the sheets of paper. The questions may show the need for further clarification or development of the topic, indicate the audience's knowledge or knowledge gaps on the topic, reflect biases and misconceptions, or just reveal what answers readers will expect to find in a paper on the topic. In small groups or full class discussion, the topics and the comments and questions written below them are evaluated and refined. Instructors can assist by providing direction and proposing possible angles for inquiry. By the end of the class, students should have a workable topic and several potential lines of inquiry as well as a good sense of the amount of background information their audience will require.

In an FYE class with a common reading on the theme of diversity, for example, students might each select a particular immigrant population (perhaps related to their own ancestry or country of origin) and explore that group's culture, language, history, and contributions in America. The instructor might also encourage students to address stereotypes and misconceptions about the immigrant group, or these could be explored in class discussion as part of the larger goal of fostering critical thinking and acceptance. Alternatively, the class could collectively look at the contributions of one group—such as Irish immigrants—and individuals or teams could develop various research subtopics such as the Irish famine and the resulting wave of emigration/immigration to America; immigrants' settlement patterns and paths; or Irish cultural contributions in food, music, trade, or traditions.

In an FYE class clustered with math and chemistry or a pre-med FIG, students might be given the general theme of pharmaceutical research and development. Students would then choose individual research topics related to their interests or majors, such as the statistical chances of success for a drug in development; the ethics of conducting drug trials that include placebos; or the chemical makeup of a drug. When students select the topics and the topics are related to their interests, the likelihood of success increases.

"The Wall" assignment involves active learning, peer review and feedback, guided discussion, and reflection. The physical nature of the activity breaks up the routine of class and engages students. Students maintain ownership of their topics and ideas while receiving feedback that helps them narrow or redirect their topic as needed. Instructors can function as coaches, calling

out questions—rhetorical and actual—remarking on student comments as they are written, and encouraging students to think critically about the topics, including subsequent possibilities for research and development. Finally, students remove their respective papers from the wall and leave with a tangible guide for their papers.

Specific to this study, an FYE class of 20 students that was part of a non-specific FIG (one not grouped by academic major) used the "Going to the Wall" activity to develop their small group paper topics related to their FYE text's chapter on Sexual Health. With selected topics of "Safe Sex Practices," "Sex and Alcohol," and "Date Rape," students went to "the Wall" to ask questions, share ideas, and record both what they knew and what they wanted to know about the topics. After they finished, papers were removed from the wall and taken back to the students' small groups for discussion. The activity generated lively discussions, and working from the papers, student groups planned their research. At the next class session, students were asked to complete an evaluation of the Wall activity.

Writing Activity 2: Constructing a Paper using "Parking Spots"

When students come to the writing center with their marked paper drafts or graded papers, one frequently seen instructor's comment is some version of "paper lacks structure and organization." When students are subsequently asked by writing consultants to produce their original paper outlines and are unable to do so, the problem often becomes clear. Creating a separate outline first before commencing writing the paper is incongruous with the way students write today. The vast majority of students write on computers and begin with a title page or page one of the paper; thus, the idea of a supplemental document or an outline overlay is both unrealistic and unlikely. In recognition of that fact and spurred by the need to help students organize and structure their papers, this writing center administrator came up with the idea of "Parking Spots," a new writing technique that can be used for any kind of writing project. In addition to creating an active outline within the paper, the "Parking Spots" technique combats several other common writing problems: inadequate research depth and breadth, incorporation of outside sources and plagiarism, and procrastination/time management. "Parking Spots" can be used by the FYE instructor to begin the process of introducing students to formal academic, and thus, structured, writing. "Parking Spots" help students transition from critical reading and research to the writing and revision process.

In essence, students can develop an active outline within their papers by creating "Parking Spots," essentially place markers within the blank pages of the unwritten paper. These pre-designated sections provide physical places within the electronic document for students to "park" ideas and information—their own and those from outside sources, which can later be removed or adapted into headings. Developing the parking spots helps students plan their papers and demystifies the writing process by breaking it down into manageable steps. Rather than viewing the paper as a daunting task and writing as the final step or product of their research, students come to view writing as a process and the paper as a construction project. The paper is built, rather than written in one relatively direct outpouring of ideas.

This approach fits perfectly into the composition classroom's goal of teaching students the value of rhetorical analysis, reflection, and revision.

In addition to providing a rhetorical structure for the paper and encouraging students to adapt and revise that structure as needed, the parking spots method aids students in avoiding plagiarism and in evaluating the depth and value of their research and provides a realistic approach whereby the paper is written in sections whenever the muse strikes or time allows. Students read the source material and take reading notes, which they "park" under the appropriate parking spot. Later, students flesh out the paper by turning those reading notes into fully formed original prose, and because they are working from the "parked" notes rather than the original source texts, the possibility of plagiarism is greatly diminished.

As the students' ideas and outside source material are parked and the paper draft develops, students can evaluate the various parking spots and the material parked under those spots to see where additional research may be required. Finally, this method allows students to write sections that are ready to be written and to do so in relatively short periods of time rather than delaying until large blocks of time become available or the looming deadline forces them into an extended writing session, leaving little time for revision.

After explaining the "Parking Spots" method, instructors can introduce a hypothetical paper topic and assignment guidelines and use in-class computers or the chalk- or whiteboard to outline the hypothetical paper or come up with appropriate parking spots through class discussion and student suggestions. Using one or two pre-selected articles, the instructor can guide students through the process of reading and evaluating the articles and determining what ideas, statistics, or direct quotes the students wish to use in the class paper. The instructor then leads students in parking the selected material—with the applicable citations—under the requisite "Parking spots," primarily in the form of relatively rough notes rather than direct text citations. Finally, the instructor asks students to address one parking spot section, adding their ideas and words and turning the parked material into paraphrased text or, when appropriate, incorporating relevant direct quotes with the proper setup and citation. By using the bulk of the class period to provide hands-on practice with the technique, students walk away with the ability to put the method into immediate use.

Specific to this activity, an FYE class of 19 pre-medical students was introduced to the "Parking Spots" method using a full (75-minute) class session. First they received a 30 minute lecture on how to use the method, after which they were given copies of two articles and asked to put the technique into practice. Working together as a class, students "parked" ideas and information from the articles. In the next class period, students were given a re-teach of the method followed by a question-and-answer session. For their final paper, a response paper, students were asked to use the "Parking Spots" method when preparing their first draft. An evaluation of this method was included in the course evaluation.

Results

Writing Activity 1: "Going to the Wall"

Study results reveal that all students found the "Going to the Wall" activity method useful at least 75% of the time in all categories. They ranked the method highest for its usefulness in pinpointing areas requiring research, followed by its value in showing what is relevant to the intended audience, determining the topics' appropriateness, and defining and developing the topics. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of the students' evaluation of the "Going to the Wall" writing activity (see Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of FYE students' evaluations of the "Going to the Wall" activity

Question	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Range
The "Going to the Wall" exercise was helpful in defining and developing the topic.	20	4.40	4.50	0.73	3.00
The "Going to the Wall" exercise was helpful in determining whether the topic was an appropriate one for the assignment.	20	4.20	4.00	0.77	2.00
The "Going to the Wall" exercise was helpful in revealing what the intended audience knew and did not know about the topic.	20	4.50	5.00	0.61	2.00
The "Going to the Wall" exercise was helpful in determining areas or aspects of the topic that required research.	20	4.60	5.00	0.76	2.00

Note: Scoring guide is as follows: 1 = never; 2 = 25% of the time; 3 = 50% of the time; 4 = 75% of the time; 5 = almost all of the time and greater than 75% of the time.

The results of the evaluation suggest that students found the "Parking Spots" method similarly beneficial. In the usage study of the "Parking Spots" method, at least 84% of the students reported that they were either currently using or planned to use the technique for each of 5 different purposes. All of the students (100%) reported their intention to use or current use of the method as a means of creating an outline and avoiding plagiarism (see Table 2).

Table 2

Number and percentage of student evaluations of "Parking Spots" for present and future use, N=19

Strategy	Do not plan to adopt	Plan to adopt	Presently Using
Use to create an outline	0	15	4
	0.00%	78.9%	21.1%
Use to avoid plagiarism	0	16	3
	0.00%	84.2%	15.8%
Use to "attack" the paper/ avoid procrastination	3	10	6
	15.8%	52.6%	31.6%
Use to determine the need for further research	3	14	2
	15.8%	73.7%	10.5
Use to stay on task and organized	3	11	5
	15.8%	57.9%	26.3%

Asked to assess "Parking Spots" as a helpful method in general and specifically as a way of organizing papers, managing outside source material, avoiding plagiarism, and directing research, students reported finding it helpful at least 75% or more of the time in every category. "Parking Spots" gained its highest support as a systematic or incremental approach, making writing papers easier in terms of time management and task completion. Notably, even the category receiving the lowest support—the use of "Parking Spots" as a method to determine the sufficiency of the research and to direct additional research—earned a minimum score of 4.1, which is 75% of the time.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Student Evaluation of the Writing "Parking Spots" Technique, N=19

Question	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Range
Do you feel that "parking spots" method of building a paper by "parking" information and ideas under headings as you plan and write your paper will be helpful in your academic career?	4.37	4.00	0.60	2.00
By creating a plan for your paper and setting up sections or "parking spots," do you feel your papers will be better organized?	4.26	4.00	0.65	2.00
By creating a plan for your paper and setting up sections or "parking spots," do you think it will be easier for you to manage your source material (books and articles) and integrate that outside material into your paper?	4.16	4.00	0.69	2.00
By using "parking spots" method and thus, an incremental or bit by bit approach, do you thing it will be easier to write your paper in terms of time management and getting it done?	4.37	5.00	0.76	2.00
Do you think the "parking spots" method will help you avoid plagiarism because you will be looking at rough reading notes ("parked") notes and not the original articles/books while you are writing?	4.32	4.00	0.75	2.00
Do you think using the "parking spots" method of outlining a paper and "parking" source material from your research will help direct your research and show you where you have good material and where you need to do more research?	4.10	4.00	0.88	3.00

Note. Scoring guide: 1 = never; 2 = 25% of the time; 3 = 50% of the time; 4 = 75% of the time; 5 = almost all of the time and greater than 75% of the time.

Discussion

The results of the studies clearly show students' appreciation of the "Going to the Wall" activity and the "Parking Spots" technique. Both studies report students' views of the methods as useful in terms of their planned or present usage, with all responses exceeding 75%. Significantly, students' responses indicate their recognition of the techniques' value for both the short-term (getting the assigned papers done) and for the longer term of their academic careers. The metacognitive nature of that recognition can itself be seen as a sign of the techniques' value.

"Going to the Wall" appeared to be a successful technique. The mean score in all of the categories was slightly above 4, which equates to current or planned usage of 75% of the time or more. Relative to the stated goal of teaching students to "cook" or think critically, it was interesting to note that students felt the exercise was particularly helpful in determining areas or aspects of the topic that required research. This category earned the highest rating, almost a "5," indicating current or planned use of "almost

all of the time and greater than 75% of the time." The standard deviation of the scores for this category was .76 indicating that virtually all of the students agreed with the finding. This is significant because research is directed inquiry, and as such, it is the basic white sauce of the academic cooking school.

The adoption survey results on the use of "Parking Spots" as a writing or pre-writing strategy are remarkable. For both the question on using the method as a means of creating an outline and the question on using the method as a means of avoiding plagiarism, all students surveyed affirmed the technique's value, indicating that they plan to adopt or were already using the "Parking Spots" technique taught to them earlier in the semester. None of the students indicated that they did not plan to adopt the strategy for these purposes. As with the "Going to the Wall" technique, students saw the value of "Parking Spots" as a tool for research-related assignments. Approximately 85% of the students acknowledged the technique's usefulness as a tool to determine the need for further research by responding to the question on research that they either were using or planned to adopt the technique. This finding should be of particular interest to institutions with what the Carnegie Foundation classifies as "high research activity."

Again, as in the survey on "Going to the Wall," students reported finding the "Parking Spots" to be very helpful. Students rated each question on the technique's value with a minimum of "4," indicating that they found the method useful at least 75% of the time for each stated purpose. There were two categories that earned slightly higher ratings than the others and each of them had a small spread — .60 and .76 respectively — indicating close consensus. First, students reported finding the technique of parking information and ideas under headings as they plan and write papers to be helpful in their academic careers. Accordingly, students not only saw the planning value of the method, but they also recognized that they can transfer it to other disciplines. Reports on using "Parking Spots" as a time management tool were also somewhat higher than those on the other uses. This suggests that students may be becoming more proactive in planning their time and their work, thereby reducing the last-minute paper writing cram sessions in which little "cooking" occurs, and the resulting papers are often mediocre meals at best.

Recommendations for Future Study

Introducing writing instruction into the FYE course is not a novel idea, nor is it an idea whose value would be disputed by administrators, faculty, or students. The issue is implementation. The realities of the FYE course dictate what can be accomplished within it. Research needs to be done to establish the present realities of the course. How many credits are offered for the class? Is there an established text, and what is the prescribed curriculum? Is service learning being incorporated? What percentage of courses is taught by non-faculty? When the course is taught by faculty, what percentage of the instructors has any background in English?

Armed with current data on the instructional realities of the course, researchers should study various strategies for introducing pre-writing and writing activities within the context of the course's academic socialization and learning strategies agendas. Collaborations to support writing should

be made with the library, the English composition or undergraduate writing program, the reading lab, and the writing center, and these collaborations should be studied to determine their success. Additionally, specific activities, such as "Going to the Wall" or using "Parking Spots," should be studied for their effectiveness and possible inclusion in the best practices for the introduction of writing curriculum into the FYE course.

Conclusion

The concept of writing excellence goes beyond the ability to express oneself in writing clearly, correctly, and concisely. Achieving writing excellence demands more: it involves creative, expressive, persuasive, and powerful writing mastery. If academic institutions want to embrace writing excellence as a goal for their students, the responsibility for accomplishing that goal cannot be borne solely by freshman composition classes and the undergraduate writing program. Writing instruction and application must be incorporated into every class, and the FYE class is the natural starting point. FYE classes must lay the foundation for academic excellence by providing the tools students need to succeed, both in college and in life. In so doing, student "chefs" will not only develop the skills to navigate the academic kitchen and sustain themselves throughout college, but also the expertise to create the gourmet feast of a rich and productive life.

Bon appétit!

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