

### Using Results from the Consortium for the Study of Writing in College

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Agenda:

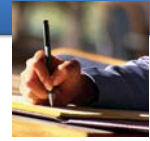
- Introduction & context: What is NSSE
- Value of Writing questions
- Using your Data
- Lessons about Writing



### Introduction

#### The value of this work...

- Explore writing-to-learn practices among your students
- Comparative data from institutions interested in writing practices
- Explore relationship between engagement and writing experiences of your students
- Meaningful way to enlist faculty in assessment
- Consortium provides opportunity for collective research and action on writing issues and a empirical foundation for writing program advocacy



### Who is in our Webinar Audience?

#### What's your role?

1. NSSE Campus Project Manager
2. Writing Program Administrators
3. Faculty member
4. Other

### What is the National Survey of Student Engagement?

- National survey to explore quality in undergraduate education started in 2000 with support from Pew Charitable Trusts
- Currently supported by Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
- 1,400 four-year institutions have participated



### Purpose of the National Survey of Student Engagement

- Refocus conversations about undergraduate quality to what matters most
- Enhance institutional improvement efforts
- Foster comparative and consortia activity
- Inform accountability efforts
- Provide systematic national data on "good educational practices"



### What is Student Engagement?

#### Student engagement

A domain of constructs that measures both the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities, and how students perceive different facets of the institutional environment that facilitate and support their learning.

Kuh, G. D. (2001). Assessing what really matters to student learning. Change.

## Sample NSSE Questions

### NSSE Main Survey Questions:

*How often have you ...*

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions

*Which have you done or do you plan to do ...*

- Work on a research project with faculty
- Study abroad

*How many hours do you spend in a typical week...*

- Preparing for class (studying, reading...)

*To what extent have your experiences at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in ...*

- Thinking critically and analytically

(see pp. 4-7 of handout)

## NSSE Writing Questions

### NSSE Main Survey Questions:

*How often have you ...*

- Prepared 2+ drafts of paper/assignment before turning it in
- Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources

*About how much ...*

- Written papers or reports of 20 pages or more
- Written papers or reports between 5 and pages
- Written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages

*To what extent have your experiences at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in ...*

- Writing clearly and effectively

(see pp. 4-7 of handout)

## NSSE Consortium

- A group of 6 or more colleges or universities participating in NSSE the same administration year that ask students additional questions that follow the core survey.
- Institutions receive consortium aggregate means and frequencies as one of the three comparison groups in their *Institutional Report*.
- 2009 Consortia (13): Catholic Colleges & Universities; Women's Colleges; Teagle Diversity Consortium; American Democracy Project etc.

## Consortium for the Study of Writing in College (CSWC) 75 schools in 2009

### Goals of the Consortium Writing Questions

- Creating a portrait of the writing students are assigned throughout their first and senior years
- Determining how students and instructors engage in selected best practices in making and completing writing assignments
- Determining whether those "best practices" really make a difference
- Providing a basis to explore possible associations between writing, engagement, and learning

The CSWC questions explore good writing practices through the experiences of students



"When writing your essays, I encourage you to think for yourselves while you express what I'd most agree with."

## History of the 27 CSWC Questions

**July 2007**—50+ WPAs online and in Tempe work with Center for Postsecondary Research to generate 140 writing questions

**Fall 2007**—Question set streamlined to 27

**Spring 2008**—Survey administered to 82 randomly selected schools

**Fall 2009**—Consortium for the Study of Writing in College is created, grows to 75 schools

**Spring 2009**—Survey administered to the CSWC schools

## CSWC Questions

Item Groups	Response Sets
1. Process items	1=No assignments
2. Genre and strategy items	2=Few assignments
3. Teaching best practices	3=Some assignments
	4=Most assignments
	5=All assignments
4. Higher order	1=Have not decided
	2=Do not plan to do
	3=Plan to do
	4=Done

(see p. 3 of handout)

## Your NSSE Reports and Data

Available for download by NSSE Campus Project Manager

- Reports
  - Frequencies and Means of core NSSE and CSWC questions
  - Each contains comparisons to CSWC peers
- Raw data (includes student identifiers)
- Consortium reports

## Frequency Distributions Report

National Survey of Student Engagement  
NSSE 2009 Frequency Distributions\*  
Consortium for the Study of Writing in College  
Sample University

Item	Variable	Response/Item	First-Year Students				Seniors			
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
14. Brainstormed (jotted ideas, mapped concepts, prepared an outline, etc.) to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment	BVC0001A	No assignments	40	4%	130	4%	41	8%	104	4%
		Few assignments	78	2%	95	2%	9	2%	70	2%
		Some assignments	115	2%	96	2%	117	2%	110	2%
		All assignments	140	2%	170	2%	134	2%	104	2%
		All assignments	70	2%	161	2%	8	2%	140	2%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>3,430</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>4,237</b>	<b>20%</b>
15. Talked with your instructor to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment	BVC0001B	No assignments	42	2%	100	2%	78	2%	142	2%
		Few assignments	8	2%	86	2%	134	2%	127	2%
		Some assignments	139	2%	1,271	2%	147	2%	1,054	2%
		All assignments	110	2%	781	2%	8	2%	707	2%
		All assignments	39	2%	366	2%	39	2%	21	2%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>3,430</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>4,200</b>	<b>20%</b>
16. Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment	BVC0001C	No assignments	20	2%	201	2%	18	2%	90	2%
		Few assignments	39	2%	905	2%	9	2%	144	2%
		Some assignments	114	2%	1,240	2%	138	2%	1,478	2%
		All assignments	108	2%	1,034	2%	138	2%	1,241	2%
		All assignments	8	2%	413	2%	10	2%	24	2%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>3,429</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>4,203</b>	<b>20%</b>
17. Received feedback from your instructor about a draft before turning in your final assignment	BVC0001D	No assignments	39	2%	106	2%	194	2%	71	2%
		Few assignments	69	2%	574	2%	179	2%	1,139	2%
		Some assignments	109	2%	1,061	2%	138	2%	1,241	2%
		All assignments	144	2%	1,044	2%	10	2%	70	2%
		All assignments	39	2%	308	2%	46	2%	29	2%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>3,430</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>4,203</b>	<b>20%</b>
18. Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment	BVC0001E	No assignments	39	2%	106	2%	194	2%	71	2%
		Few assignments	69	2%	607	2%	113	2%	1,087	2%
		Some assignments	144	2%	1,044	2%	10	2%	70	2%
		All assignments	120	2%	1,040	2%	138	2%	1,241	2%

## Mean Comparisons Report

National Survey of Student Engagement  
NSSE 2009 Mean Comparisons\*  
Consortium for the Study of Writing in College  
Sample University

Item	Variable	Item	Mean	SD	SU compared with CSWC	
					Mean	SD
<b>During the current school year, for how many of your writing assignments</b>						
<b>14. Brainstormed (jotted ideas, mapped concepts, prepared an outline, etc.) to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment</b>						
		BVC0001A	1.72	1.04	3.42	3.47
		SR	3.23	3.27		
		BVC0001B	3.03	2.96	.04	.04
		SR	3.14	3.24		
		BVC0001C	2.68	2.71	-.03	-.03
		SR	2.76	2.81		
		BVC0001D	3.06	3.00	-.03	-.03
		SR	3.49	3.30	**	.16
		BVC0001E	2.61	2.67	-.04	-.04
		SR	3.30	3.26		
		BVC0001F	2.76	2.81	-.04	-.04
		SR	1.93	1.88		
		BVC0001G	1.58	1.49		
		SR	1.58	1.49		

## Raw Data (SPSS)

NSSE09 Data (Data09) - PASW Statistics Data Editor

ST	BVC0001A	BVC0001B	BVC0001C	BVC0001D	BVC0001E	BVC0001F	BVC0001G	BVC0001H	BVC0001I	BVC0001J
35	3	4	4	3	1	5	2	3		
36										
37	2	2	2	3	1	1	4	2	2	2
38	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
39	4	2	3	2	2	1	1	4	3	3
40	4	4	5	5	5	1	5	1	3	5
41	3	5	5	3	4	1	1	5	3	4
42	2	2	2	1	1	1	4	2	2	4
43	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	4
44	5	2	3	2	2	1	5	4	4	2
45	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
46										
47	4	4	4	4	4	1	1	4	2	4
48										
49	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	4	2	3
50	2	2	3	4	2	1	5	2	2	4
51	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	5	4	3
52	2	2	3	1	2	1	2	4	2	4
53										
54	5	1	4	3	2	3	4	3	4	2
55	3	2	4	2	2	1	1	4	3	4
56										

## Consortium Report

National Survey of Student Engagement  
NSSE 2009 Engagement Item Frequency Distribution  
Consortium for the Study of Writing in College  
First-Year Students

Item	Variable	Item	Mean	SD	Mean		SD		B-C	B-C	CWC
					Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
<b>14. Brainstormed (jotted ideas, mapped concepts, prepared an outline, etc.) to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment</b>											
		Location	1.80	1.04	1.84	1.04	2.00	1.04	2.00	1.04	1.80
		Other	1.74	1.04	1.80	1.04	2.00	1.04	2.00	1.04	1.74
		Very other	1.70	1.04	1.70	1.04	2.00	1.04	2.00	1.04	1.70
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1.72</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>1.72</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>1.72</b>
<b>15. Talked with your instructor to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment</b>											
		Location	3.03	2.96	3.03	2.96	3.03	2.96	3.03	2.96	3.03
		Other	3.03	2.96	3.03	2.96	3.03	2.96	3.03	2.96	3.03
		Very other	3.03	2.96	3.03	2.96	3.03	2.96	3.03	2.96	3.03
		<b>Total</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>3.03</b>
<b>16. Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment</b>											
		Location	2.68	2.71	2.68	2.71	2.68	2.71	2.68	2.71	2.68
		Other	2.68	2.71	2.68	2.71	2.68	2.71	2.68	2.71	2.68
		Very other	2.68	2.71	2.68	2.71	2.68	2.71	2.68	2.71	2.68
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.68</b>
<b>17. Received feedback from your instructor about a draft before turning in your final assignment</b>											
		Location	3.06	3.00	3.06	3.00	3.06	3.00	3.06	3.00	3.06
		Other	3.06	3.00	3.06	3.00	3.06	3.00	3.06	3.00	3.06
		Very other	3.06	3.00	3.06	3.00	3.06	3.00	3.06	3.00	3.06
		<b>Total</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>3.06</b>
<b>18. Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment</b>											
		Location	2.61	2.67	2.61	2.67	2.61	2.67	2.61	2.67	2.61
		Other	2.61	2.67	2.61	2.67	2.61	2.67	2.61	2.67	2.61
		Very other	2.61	2.67	2.61	2.67	2.61	2.67	2.61	2.67	2.61
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.61</b>

### Making the Most of Your Data

- Involve various campus audiences from the beginning and to help make meaning of the data; *why are the numbers what they are?*
- Explore curious results and collect real student experiences and faculty practices through focus groups with students and faculty.
- Every number and comparison reported should be accompanied by an interpretation of what can and cannot be concluded from the results.
- Link results to other information about the student experience and complementary initiatives.
- Combine NSSE with institutional data, such as retention statistics, GPA, student characteristics to further analysis.

### What Can You Explore?

1. How did our students respond to the 27 questions?
  - Individual items and scales
  - Demographic comparisons (e.g., by gender, major)
2. How do our students compare to those attending other institutions?
3. Relationship questions “Are students who completed writing intensive courses more likely to do X more?”
4. Merge school records (e.g., participation in special programs, GPA, learning outcome measures)

### Collaborating with Other CSWC Institutions

CSWC institutions might choose to share data to answer specific questions.

- Combine NSSE data with other institutional data, such as persistence, GPA, ethnicity, recorded academic activities, scores on writing portfolios, and other general-education assessment.
- For instance, a group of schools with high-visibility writing centers might wish to band together to explore the impact of writing centers of GPA and retention, combining using the data they collect about who has visited the writing center.

### 2009 CSWC Data

- 17,735 first-year students and 21,903 seniors
- 75 baccalaureate-granting institutions
  - 19 doctoral level
  - 38 master’s level
  - 9 baccalaureate arts & sciences
  - 7 baccalaureate diverse
  - 2 other types
- 53 public and 22 private institutions

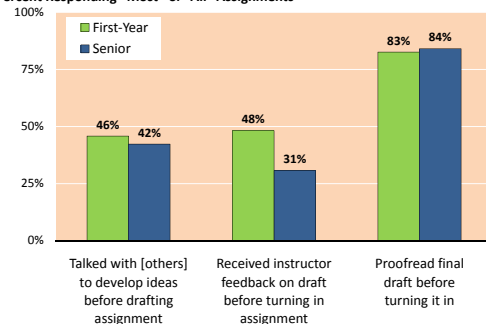
### 2009 CSWC Data

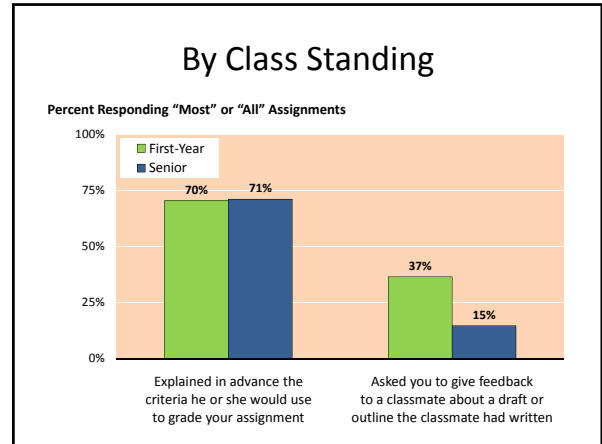
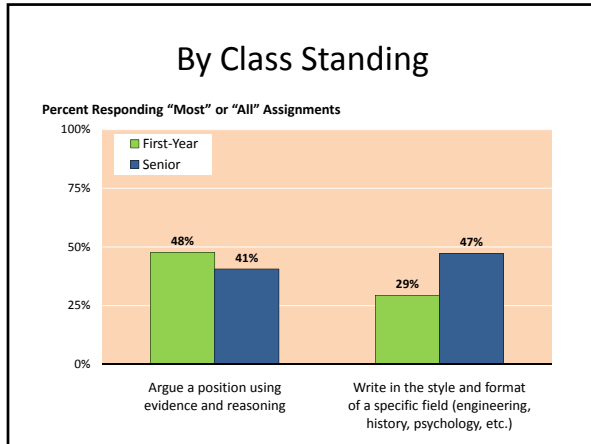
#### Amount of Writing

- Average: FY = 93 pages, SR = 138 pages
- Median: FY = 69 pages, SR = 108 pages
- Mid 50% range: FY 49-129 pgs, SR = 49-191 pgs

### By Class Standing

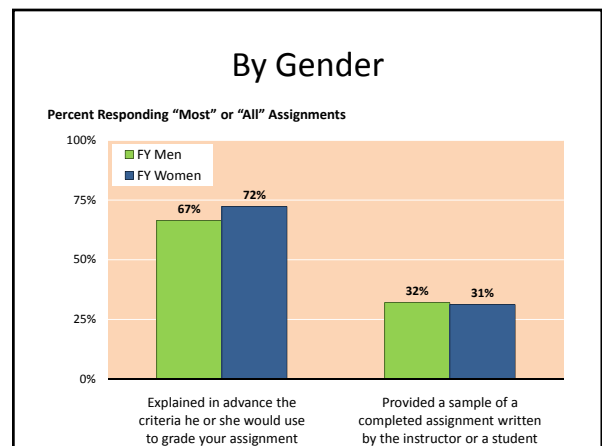
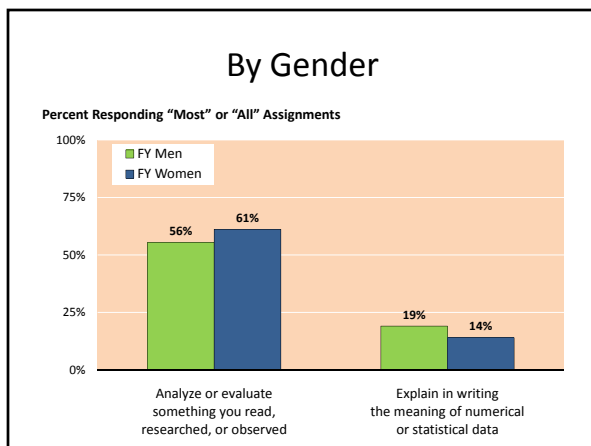
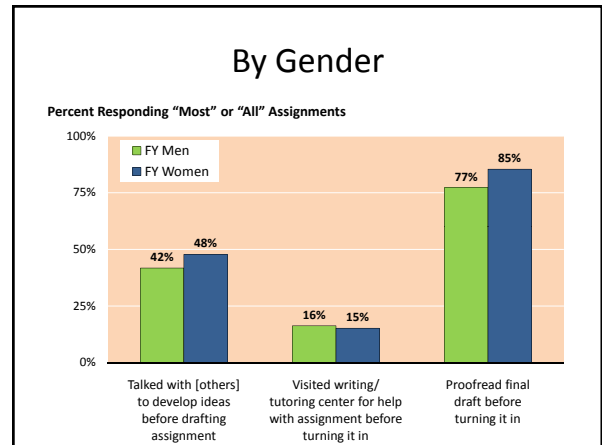
Percent Responding “Most” or “All” Assignments

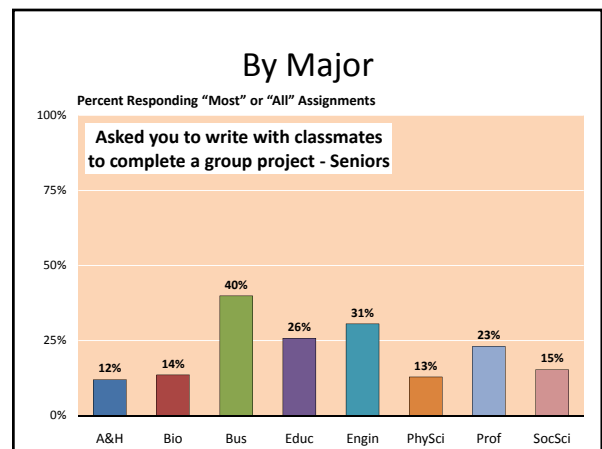
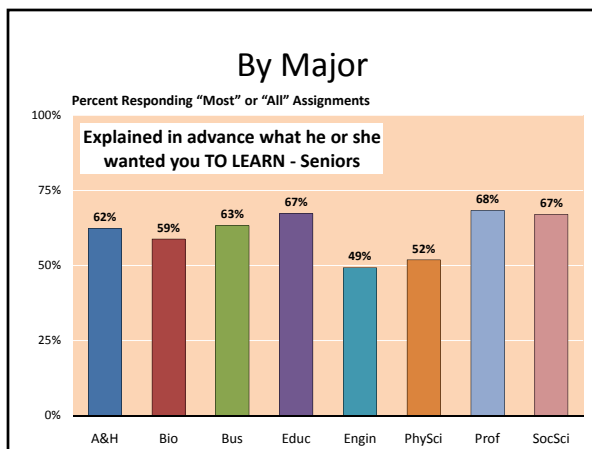
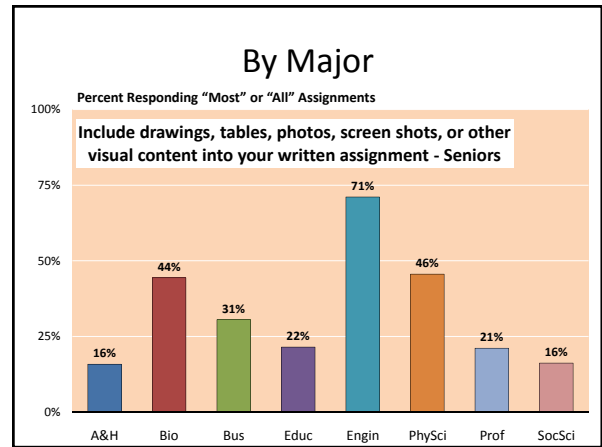
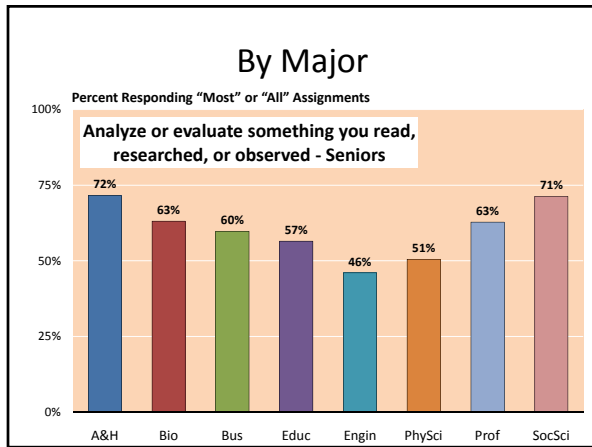
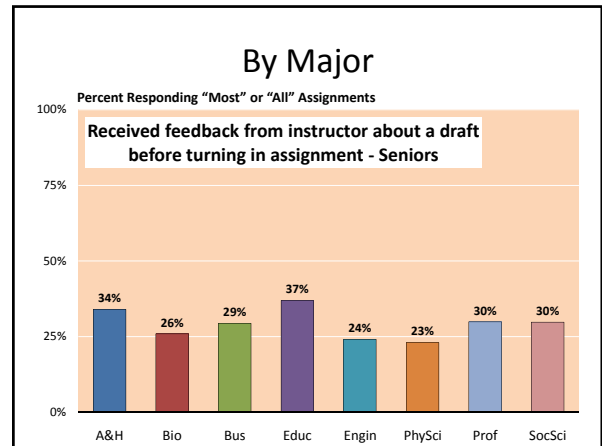
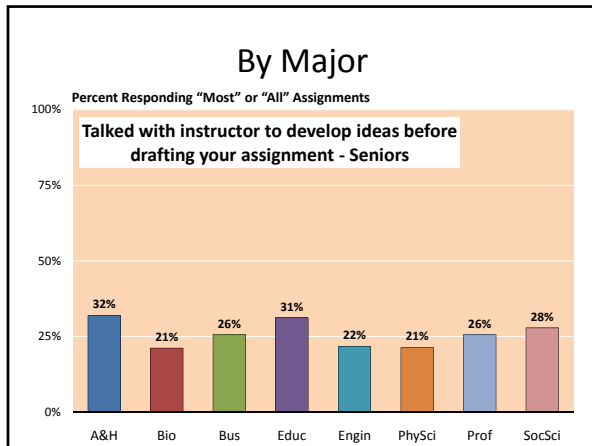




To ponder...

- *What do these results suggest about writing practices in the first year compared to senior student experiences?*
- *Are your results similar?*





### Exploring Relationships

- What is the relationship between...
  - writing practices and student engagement among Seniors?
  - writing practices and First Year GPA and retention?
  - writing practices and writing portfolio scores?
  - writing practices and CAAP Writing Essay Test scores?

**What are you doing, or considering?**

See: Gonyea, R.M. & Anderson, P. (2009) *Writing, Engagement, and Successful Learning Outcomes*. Paper presented :Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Diego, CA.

### Research Using 2008 Writing Question Data

#### First-Year Students

- 40 institutions
- 5,683 students
  - 66% female
  - 39% first-generation
  - 5% African American
  - 4% Asian
  - 7% Latino/a
  - 74% White

#### Seniors

- 82 institutions
- 12,015 students
  - 66% female
  - 39% first-generation
  - 6% African American
  - 4% Asian
  - 6% Latino/a
  - 77% White

### Scales

#### Writing Practices

- Assign Meaning-Constructing Writing Tasks
- Explain Writing Expectations Clearly
- Encourage Interactive Writing Activities

Scale reliabilities range from .75 to .82

(see p. 8 of handout)

### Scales

#### Approaches to Deep Learning

- Higher-Order Learning Activities
- Integrative Learning Activities
- Reflective Learning Activities

Scale reliabilities range from .71 to .83

(see p. 9 of handout)

### Scales

#### Self-Reported Gains

- Practical Competence
- Personal and Social Development
- General Education

Scale reliabilities range from .81 to .87

(see p. 10 of handout)

### Findings: Basic Correlations

**Writing scales are positively correlated with deep learning activities**

Writing Practices	Approaches to Deep Learning		
	Higher-Order Learning Activities	Integrated Learning Activities	Reflective Learning Activities
Encourage Interactive	FY .36	.41	.28
Writing Processes	SR .38	.41	.29
Assign Meaning-Const. Writing Tasks	FY .27	.29	.23
	SR .29	.29	.20
Explain Writing	FY .30	.41	.24
Expectations Clearly	SR .29	.39	.22

\* All correlations significant at p<.001

**Findings: Basic Correlations**

**Writing scales are positively correlated with self-reported gains of learning and growth.**

<i>Writing Practices</i>	<i>Self-Reported Gains</i>		
	Practical Comps.	Personal & Social	General Education
Encourage Interactive	FY .43	.41	.35
Writing Processes	SR .37	.38	.34
Design Intel. Focused	FY .38	.34	.41
Writing Assignments	SR .39	.37	.39
Explain Writing	FY .45	.46	.40
Expectations Clearly	SR .37	.43	.33

\* All correlations significant at p<.001

**Findings : Multivariate Regression – Deep Learning**

**Results controlling for student characteristics and writing amount**

✓ Sig. - trivial

✓✓ Sig. - small

✓✓✓ Sig. - moderate

- Variables**
- Control Variables**
- gender
  - transfer status
  - living on campus
  - age
  - international student
  - parental education
  - race
  - grades
  - major
  - number of written pages
  - amount of assigned reading
  - deep learning (gains models only)

**Multivariate Regression – Deep Lrng**

**Results adjusting for student characteristics and writing amount**

<i>First-Year Students</i>	<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
	Higher-Order Learning Activities	Integrative Learning Activities	Reflective Learning Activities
<i>Independent Variables</i>			
Encourage Interactive Writing Activities	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Assign Meaning-Const. Writing Tasks	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Explain Writing Expectations Clearly	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

**Multivariate Regression – Deep Lrng**

**Results adjusting for student characteristics and writing amount**

<i>Seniors</i>	<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
	Higher-Order Learning Activities	Integrative Learning Activities	Reflective Learning Activities
<i>Independent Variables</i>			
Encourage Interactive Writing Activities	✓	✓✓✓	✓
Assign Meaning-Const. Writing Tasks	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Explain Writing Expectations Clearly	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

**Multivariate Regression – Gains**

**Results adjusting for student characteristics, writing amount, and deep learning**

<i>First-Year Students</i>	<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
	Practical Competence	Personal & Social	General Education
<i>Independent Variables</i>			
Encourage Interactive Writing Activities	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Assign Meaning-Const. Writing Tasks	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Explain Writing Expectations Clearly	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓

**Multivariate Regression – Gains**  
**Results adjusting for student characteristics, writing amount, and deep learning**

Seniors	<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
	Practical Competence	Personal & Social	General Education
<i>Independent Variables</i>			
Encourage Interactive Writing Activities	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Assign Meaning-Const. Writing Tasks	✓	✓	✓
Explain Writing Expectations Clearly	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓

**Results Summary**

1. The more frequently students work on meaning-constructing assignments, engage in interactive writing activities, and receive clear expectations:
  - A. The more they engage in deep learning activities.
  - B. They greater the gains in learning and development that they attribute to their college.

**Results Summary**

2. These results persist after controlling for:
  - A. Student characteristics such as gender, parental education, race, grades, and major.
  - B. The amount of reading and writing that students do.

**Results Summary**

3. Working on meaning-constructing assignments, engaging in interactive writing activities, and receiving clear expectations are each more important than the amount of writing that students do.

**Implications**

- First, note that our results all pertain to factors over which instructors have complete control
  - Kind of projects they assign
  - Way they explain their assignments
  - Activities they require students to engage in while working on the assignments

**Implications**

- You can tell faculty that they are more likely to achieve their goals if they do the following;
  - assign meaning-making projects
  - explain their expectations clearly
  - include interactive activities in the writing process

***These practices are more effective when used in combination***

## Looking Forward

- Joining the Consortium for 2010
- More data from Spring 2010
- Further analyses of existing and future data
- Enhance question set
- Cooperation among Consortium schools to share data, conduct focus groups, share ideas, conduct generalizable research
- *Other ideas?*

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## Questions?

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