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

Bob Gonyea, Associate Director, NSSE
Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director, NSSE Institute
with
Chuck Paine, Associate Professor, University of New Mexico

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

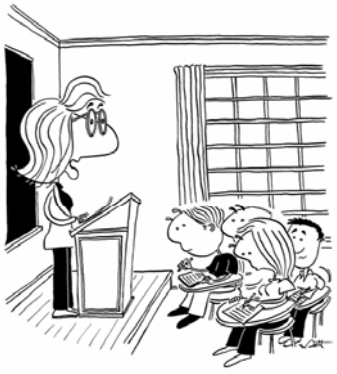
- A group of 6 or more colleges or universities participating in NSSE the same administration year that ask students additional questions that follow the core survey.
- Institutions receive consortium aggregate means and frequencies as one of the three comparison groups in their *Institutional Report*.
- 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=Few assignments 3=Some assignments 4=Most assignments 5=All assignments
2. Genre and strategy items	
3. Teaching best practices	
4. Higher order	1=Have not decided 2=Do not plan to do 3=Plan to do 4=Done

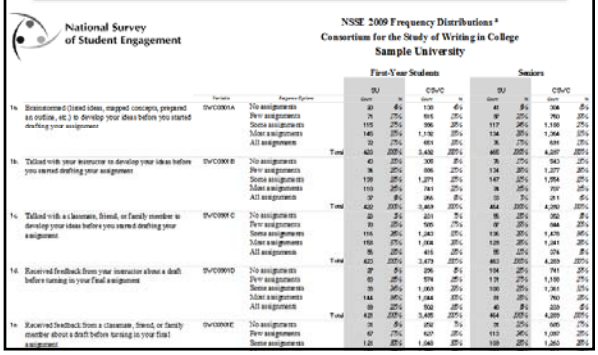
(see p. 3 of handout)

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



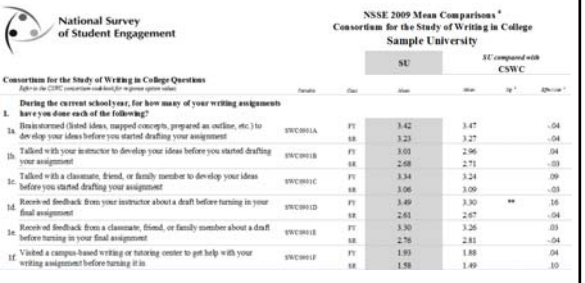
National Survey of Student Engagement

NSSE 2009 Frequency Distributions*
Consortium for the Study of Writing in College
Sample University

First-Year Students | Seniors

			SU		CSWC		SU		CSWC	
1a.	Brainstormed (listed ideas, mapped concepts, prepared an outline, etc.) to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment	SWC0901A	No assignments	33	4%	138	4%	41	3%	308	5%
			Few assignments	78	17%	595	17%	97	15%	760	15%
			Some assignments	115	25%	996	28%	117	26%	1,110	27%
			More assignments	145	33%	1,130	33%	134	30%	1,264	31%
			All assignments	72	17%	661	19%	56	13%	691	17%
		Total		423	100%	3,432	100%	445	100%	4,207	100%
1b.	Talked with your instructor to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment	SWC0901B	No assignments	43	10%	308	9%	76	17%	563	13%
			Few assignments	96	23%	806	23%	134	30%	1,277	30%
			Some assignments	139	33%	1,271	37%	147	33%	1,264	30%
			More assignments	110	26%	741	22%	78	18%	797	19%
			All assignments	37	9%	306	9%	11	3%	311	7%
		Total		423	100%	3,432	100%	446	100%	4,210	100%
1c.	Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment	SWC0901C	No assignments	20	5%	201	6%	16	4%	350	8%
			Few assignments	70	17%	595	17%	97	22%	944	22%
			Some assignments	116	27%	1,263	37%	136	31%	1,435	34%
			More assignments	158	37%	1,008	29%	128	29%	1,041	25%
			All assignments	56	13%	416	12%	68	15%	374	9%
		Total		420	100%	3,473	100%	445	100%	4,203	100%
1d.	Received feedback from your instructor about a draft before turning in your final assignment	SWC0901D	No assignments	27	6%	196	6%	104	23%	741	18%
			Few assignments	63	15%	574	17%	128	29%	1,110	27%
			Some assignments	78	19%	1,203	35%	108	25%	1,361	33%
			More assignments	144	35%	1,044	30%	91	20%	760	18%
			All assignments	89	22%	502	15%	40	9%	229	6%
		Total		421	100%	3,495	100%	464	100%	4,209	100%
1e.	Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment	SWC0901E	No assignments	31	8%	250	7%	78	18%	605	15%
			Few assignments	67	17%	627	18%	113	26%	1,087	26%
			Some assignments	120	29%	1,048	30%	109	25%	1,263	30%

Mean Comparisons Report

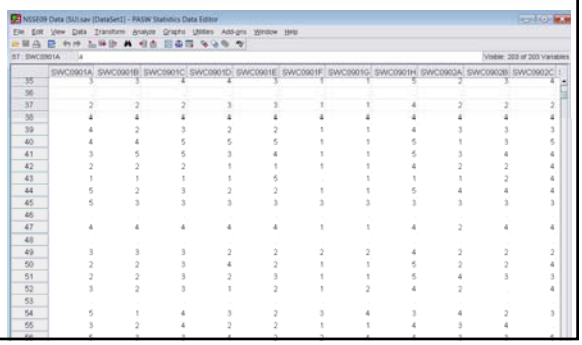


National Survey of Student Engagement

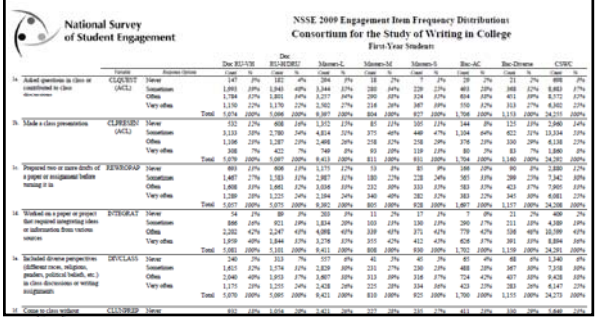
NSSE 2009 Mean Comparisons*
Consortium for the Study of Writing in College
Sample University

Consortium for the Study of Writing in College Questions			SU	CSWC		
During the current school year, for how many of your writing assignments have you done each of the following?						
1a. Brainstormed (listed ideas, mapped concepts, prepared an outline, etc.) to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment	SWC0901A	FY	3.42	3.47		-.04
		SR	3.23	3.27		-.04
1b. Talked with your instructor to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment	SWC0901B	FY	3.01	2.96		.04
		SR	2.68	2.71		-.03
1c. Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop your ideas before you started drafting your assignment	SWC0901C	FY	3.34	3.24		.09
		SR	3.06	3.09		-.03
1d. Received feedback from your instructor about a draft before turning in your final assignment	SWC0901D	FY	3.49	3.30	**	.16
		SR	2.61	2.67		-.04
1e. Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment	SWC0901E	FY	3.30	3.26		.03
		SR	2.76	2.81		-.04
1f. Visited a campus-based writing or tutoring center to get help with your writing assignment before turning it in	SWC0901F	FY	1.93	1.88		.04
		SR	1.58	1.49		.10

Raw Data (SPSS)



Consortium Report



National Survey of Student Engagement

NSSE 2009 Engagement Item Frequency Distributions
Consortium for the Study of Writing in College
First-Year Students

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

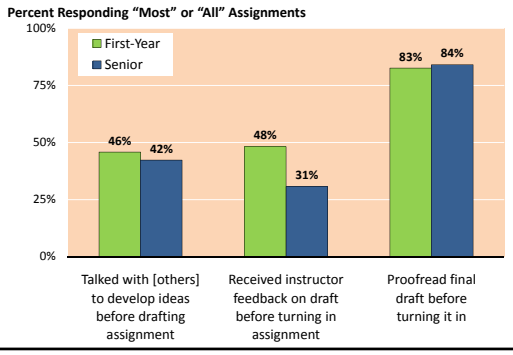
- 17,735 first-year students and 21,903 seniors
- 75 baccalaureate-granting institutions
  - 19 doctoral level
  - 38 master's level
  - 9 baccalaureate arts & sciences
  - 7 baccalaureate diverse
  - 2 other types
- 53 public and 22 private institutions

2009 CSWC Data

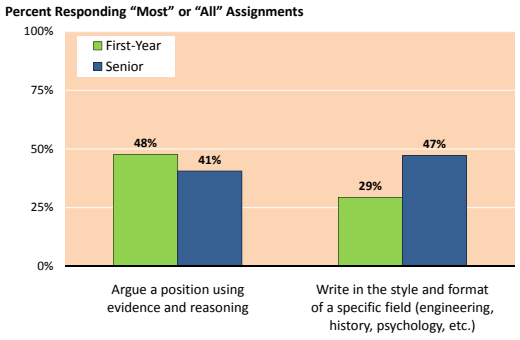
Amount of Writing

- 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

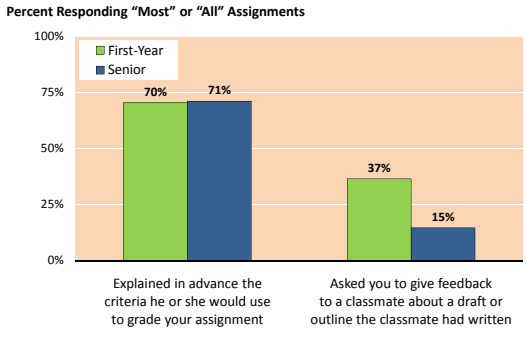
By Class Standing



By Class Standing



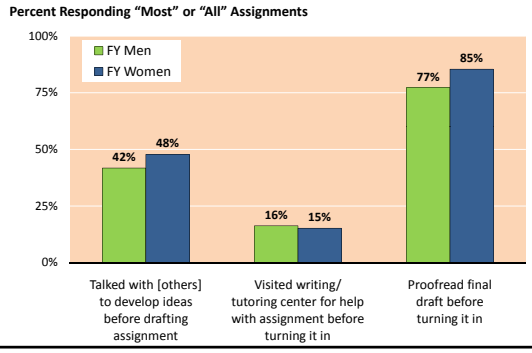
By Class Standing



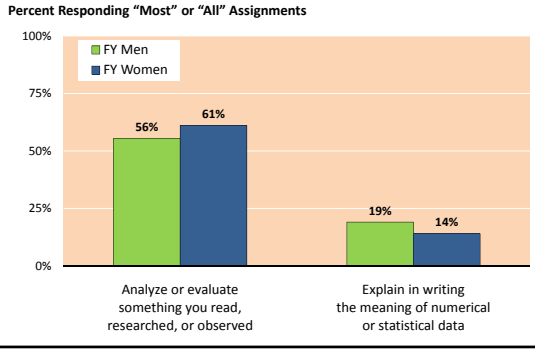
To ponder…

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

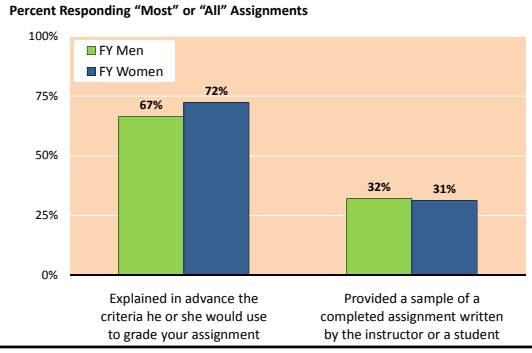
By Gender

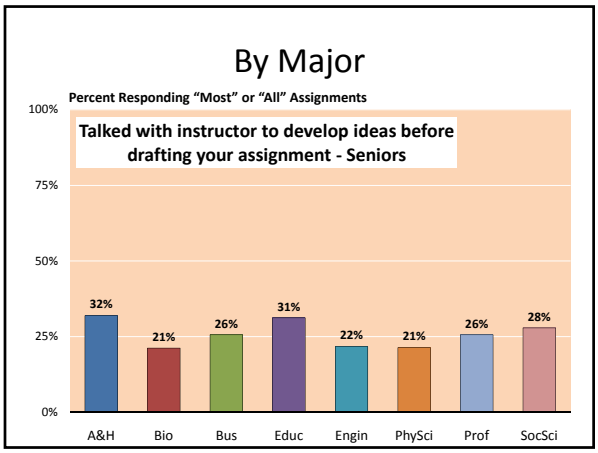


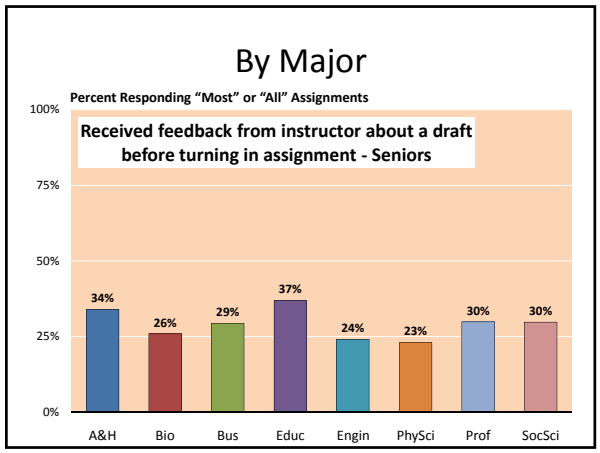
By Gender

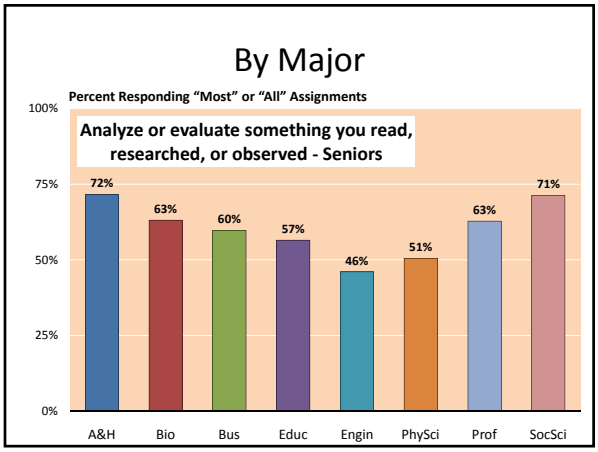


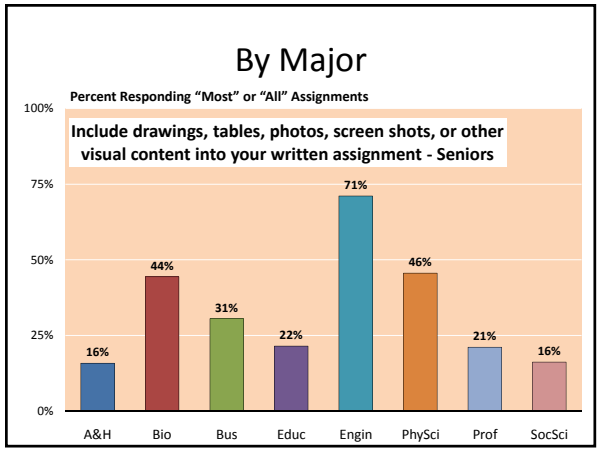
By Gender




By Major
Percent Responding "Most" or "All" Assignments
Talked with instructor to develop ideas before drafting your assignment - Seniors
100%
75%
50%
25%
0%
32%
21%
26%
31%
22%
21%
26%
28%
A&H
Bio
Bus
Educ
Engin
PhySci
Prof
SocSci


By Major
Percent Responding "Most" or "All" Assignments
Received feedback from instructor about a draft before turning in assignment - Seniors
100%
75%
50%
25%
0%
34%
26%
29%
37%
24%
23%
30%
30%
A&H
Bio
Bus
Educ
Engin
PhySci
Prof
SocSci


By Major
Percent Responding "Most" or "All" Assignments
Analyze or evaluate something you read, researched, or observed - Seniors
100%
75%
50%
25%
0%
72%
63%
60%
57%
46%
51%
63%
71%
A&H
Bio
Bus
Educ
Engin
PhySci
Prof
SocSci


By Major
Percent Responding "Most" or "All" Assignments
Include drawings, tables, photos, screen shots, or other visual content into your written assignment - Seniors
100%
75%
50%
25%
0%
16%
44%
31%
22%
71%
46%
21%
16%
A&H
Bio
Bus
Educ
Engin
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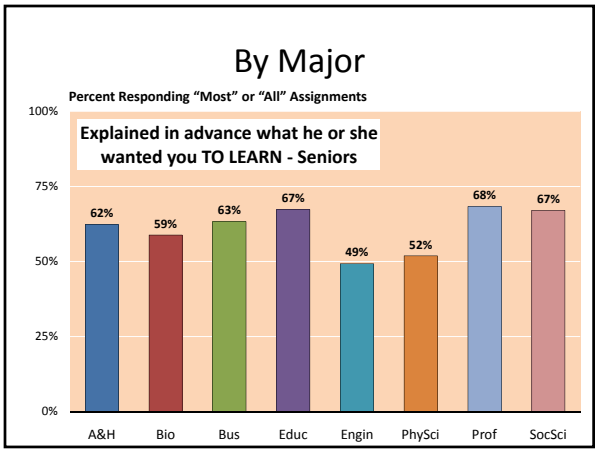
Prof
SocSci


By Major
Percent Responding "Most" or "All" Assignments
Explained in advance what he or she wanted you TO LEARN - Seniors
100%
75%
50%
25%
0%
62%
59%
63%
67%
49%
52%
68%
67%
A&H
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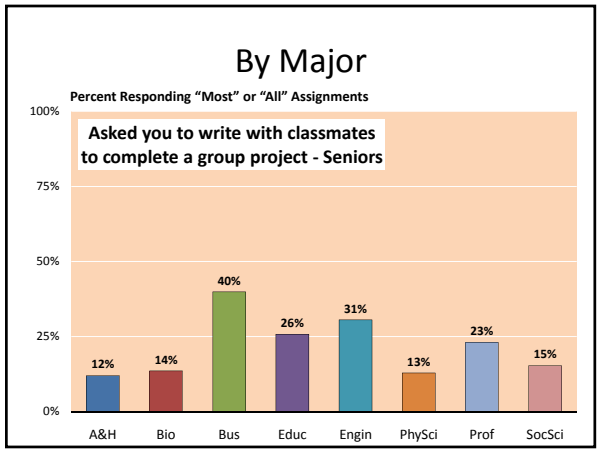
By Major
Percent Responding "Most" or "All" Assignments
Asked you to write with classmates to complete a group project - Seniors
100%
75%
50%
25%
0%
12%
14%
40%
26%
31%
13%
23%
15%
A&H
Bio
Bus
Educ
Engin
PhySci
Prof
SocSci

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

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

Writing Practices		*Self-Reported Gains* 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

First-Year Students / *Independent Variables*	*Dependent Variables* Higher-Order Learning Activities	Integrative Learning Activities	Reflective Learning Activities
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

Seniors / *Independent Variables*	*Dependent Variables* Higher-Order Learning Activities	Integrative Learning Activities	Reflective Learning Activities
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

First-Year Students / *Independent Variables*	*Dependent Variables* Practical Competence	Personal & Social	General Education
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	*Dependent Variables*		
	Practical Competence	Personal & Social	General Education
Independent Variables			
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?*

Permission to use the CSWC questions

Indiana University grants permission under the following conditions:

1. Items used for institutional assessment and improvement.
2. Researchers notify NSSE by e-mail in advance of their intention to use the questions. (Send to Bob at rgonyea@indiana.edu.)
3. On all survey forms using the questions and on all publications and presentations of data obtained through the questions, the researchers state that the questions were *used with permission from the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and the Council of Writing Program Administrators*.
4. The researchers provide the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research with copies of all of their reports, presentations, and publications that use data they obtained through the questions.

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Questions?

Bob Gonyea
rgonyea@indiana.edu

Jillian Kinzie
jikinzie@indiana.edu

Chuck Paine
cpaine@unm.edu

National Survey of Student Engagement

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