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# You say (Re)Search, I Say Research: Locating the Language Divide Between Secondary and Postsecondary Classrooms

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## **Introduction**

Michael approaches the front of the room hesitantly with his EN 125 diagnostic essay in hand. Peering down at me, he asks, “Miss Malloy, are you sure I have to take this class? I was a really good writer in high school.” Michael, of course, is not wrong to ask such a question. In his mind, he has been writing in school for nearly 13 years, so what made a first-year writing course necessary? I stammer out an answer using buzzwords such as the core curriculum, liberal arts education, and good practice. As expected, he is not convinced.

First-year writing instructors, such as me, often find themselves in situations like this one—trying to convince students that even though they may already possess a fundamental grasp of grammar, an efficient understanding of using Google to find information, and a reliance on the five-paragraph essay—all common expectations of high school writing—most students have barely scratched the surface about how academic writing works. Many of the buzzwords of higher education, such as the ones I used in response to my student’s question, fail to address the key reason students are required to enroll in courses such as EN 125: they are not yet prepared for the rigor and diversity of college-level writing.

At the beginning of the semester, first-year students at John Carroll University, such as Michael, often question why they are required to take a designated writing course. As a graduate teaching assistant, I find my first week is merely defending why EN 125 is required. During the second week, I introduce rhetoric and rhetorical analysis. As soon as I do, students confess learning how to write for college is like learning what seems to them like a foreign language. The duration of the semester, I hear questions

such as: How do I know what my *ethos* is? Why do I need to have an audience? When should I craft my thesis statement? Presented with new language and new writing tasks, first year writing students often shift from asking why they are in a first-year writing class to questioning how to implement new skills and vocabulary. This change in questioning indicates a student's growth from a high school to a college writer.

Yet, my work as a high school teacher and tutor taught me that students are writing often. When I ask my first-year writing students about high school, my students and I share a mutual language. However, this shared vocabulary is only relevant for the diagnostic essay assignment. As the course continues, I introduce new vocabulary and tasks: rhetoric, the research process, a literacy narrative, etc. After the diagnostic essay, I speak in a language unfamiliar to the recently-graduated high school students sitting in my college classroom. I, as a writing teacher, switched from a high school teacher's dialect to that of a college instructor. Mark Hannah and Christina Saidy, in their article, "Locating the Terms of Engagement: Shared Language Development in Secondary to Postsecondary Writing Transitions," recognize that a language difference between high school teachers and college instructors exists. As the pair suggests, teachers present writing through different terms in high school than in college. Hannah and Saidy's article details their experience, echoing my experience with my students, in which high school teachers and college instructors had difficulty speaking about writing collaboratively because the vocabulary for teaching writing differed. My fluency in both high school and college discourses has allowed me to code switch, at first connect with my students and then to teach college-level writing. For my students, the unfamiliar language of the goals

of the first-year writing program urges them to not only consider the writing product submitted for a grade, but also writing as a process.

In high school, students write and submit written products across the K-12 curriculum. However, they often have to shift their focus to the writing process to succeed in college-level writing courses. It appears, then, that first-year students are entering the college writing classroom confused. In their book, *Writing Across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing*, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak address this confusion by focusing on the notion of transfer—the movement of writing skills and prior knowledge from one setting into another. They urge educators to be consistent when describing various writing skills across academic settings so that students make connections between assignments and classes to transfer previously-learned skills and knowledge into a new setting. This concept of transfer leads me to reconsider the ways in which the teaching of writing is governed by standardized outcomes.

Both high school teachers and college writing instructors develop writing curricula based on the governing academic standards utilized by their institutions. High school teachers design writing curriculum from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a set of K-12 math and language arts standards governing all 50 states. The CCSS provide a path of scaffolded objectives in math, reading, and writing geared toward promoting college- and career- readiness. In contrast to the increasingly prescriptive high school standards, many colleges and universities draw from the goals of the Writing Program Administration's Outcomes Statement for First-Year Writing. While not a requirement of colleges and universities, the WPA Outcomes Statement lists the

writing goals and skills students should be exposed to by the end of the first-year writing course sequence. The flexibility of the WPA Outcomes Statement grants institutions the freedom of creating a course, its curriculum, and its assignments that best serves the student population. The implementation and influence of these writing standards differs from the secondary to the postsecondary level.

It appears, thus, that with the development of the secondary and postsecondary standards, student transfer of writing skills, theoretically, should come more easily, because of these standards. I find, however, that my students struggle to differentiate what made writing “college-level,” just as Patrick Sullivan and Howard Tinberg collection *What Is College-Level Writing?* debates. They argue that the definition of college-level writing adapts to the people and the institutions employing the term. Therefore, Sullivan and Tinberg argue that the expectations and standards for college-level writing mold themselves to individual perspectives rather than a universal term. My experience in the EN 125 classroom quickly signaled to me that students often faced obstacles that impeded their ability to transfer writing skills to college that only begins with an understanding of what college-level writing is.

Many first-year writing students experience confusion when asked to produce writing within a specific genre, particularly with personal writing and research-based projects. The confusion many students experience with college writing assignments is captured best in Dan Melzer’s *Assignments Across the Curriculum: A National Study of College Writing*, a study and analysis of college writing assignments. Melzer argues that the generic research paper is problematic because it is always discipline-specific and, therefore, its features shift from discipline to discipline. His argument about writing

assignments reflects the nuances that often prevent students from transferring writing skills from the high school to the college level. This argument suggests that the nuances deterring transfer may be the writing standards themselves because of how the language of the standards is constructed. Ashley Rives and Allison Wynhoff Olsen analyze the difference in language between the CCSS and the Outcomes Statement in their discussion, “Where’s the Rhetoric? Exposing the (Mis)Alignment in the Common Core State Writing Standards.” Discrepancies in the vocabulary choices between both sets of standards, the pair argues, make it difficult for high school students to transition into college writers.

The lack of shared language between high school and college writing standards often forces students too much into the role of trying to decipher what is expected of them, rather than acting as fluid participants—students who understand the expectations and genres of college-level writing tasks. As such, students in first-year writing classes often struggle to learn new vocabulary and tasks, and as a result, often revert to the habitual practices and language of high school writing. As participants, though, students are able to engage with writing as a process, and they can be more successful as college-level writers if teachers at both levels work together to support the transition students experience between a high school expectations and college expectations.

In this paper, then, I argue that the difference in the language used to create the writing standards at both levels often hinders students’ ability to transfer writing skills and prior knowledge from a high school classroom into first-year writing. Using Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak’s definition of transfer, Patrick Sullivan and Howard Tinberg’s definitions of college-level writing, and Dan Melzer’s

work on research assignments as both a process and product, I contend specifically that students struggle with writing research papers in EN 125 at John Carroll University. To make this argument, I first read and analyze the CCSS directing public high school curriculum and the WPA Outcomes Statement guiding the first-year writing program at John Carroll University. Second, I draw from surveys with first-year writing students, first-year writing instructors, and high school teachers regarding the teaching of research as both a product and a process, regarding student preparedness for college-level writing, and regarding awareness of academic standards for writing curriculum. As such, I review the results of each survey to further describe the lack of shared language between high school and college writing classrooms and how the disconnected language impacts student transfer. Scholarship in composition studies has not yet addressed the language of the high school CCSS, nor has it addressed the disconnect between that language and the language of the WPA Outcomes Statement. My project, therefore, extends research in the field discussing the lack of shared language between the Common Core State Standards and the Council of Writing Program Administrations' Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition.

### **Literature Review**

Composition studies currently includes substantial scholarship relating to transfer and the connections between high school and college level writing; however, much still needs to be done on the shared language, or lack thereof, between high school and college writing standards. I establish the foundation of my research using Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak's definition of transfer. Second, I turn to Patrick Sullivan and Howard Tinberg's articulation of college-level writing and Dan

Melzer's study on college writing assignments, including the research paper. Third, I summarize the current scholarship most applicable to my research using Mark A. Hannah and Christina Saidy's discussion of the lack of shared language for writing between secondary and postsecondary settings as defined by composition studies. Fourth, I present Ashley Rives and Allison Wynhoff Olsen's close reading of the CCSS and attention to rhetoric as a gateway into my research study. Finally, I limit the scope of my research to the research paper genre through Allison Head's review of first year students' writing processes. The literature reviewed here demonstrates how the field of education, as exemplified by Rives and Olsen, fixates on how students are not prepared for college level writing; meanwhile, composition studies, as evidenced by Hannah and Saidy, begins to analyze the CCSS as an explanation of why students are not prepared.

Considering how and why students enter college classrooms unprepared for college-level writing expectations stems from the concept of transfer. Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak's book, *The Content of Composition, Reflective Practice, and the Transfer of Knowledge*, defines transfer as the development of "writing knowledge and practices that [students] can draw upon, use, and repurpose for new writing tasks in new settings" (Yancey et al, 2). Their definition of transfer demands teacher and student concentration on developing writing skills, rather than mechanical correctness. The focus on skills provides students with a toolbox of resources for any writing task rather than a checklist fitted particularly for one task. Further, Yancey and her collaborators contend, as articulated in their book by Michael Donnelly, "There is no 'must' content; the only thing(s) that really matters is what students are doing— i.e., reading, thinking, responding, writing, receiving (feedback), and re-writing" (3). Transfer, then, is not only



learning skills concerning writing, but also carrying those skills into other disciplines and into college classrooms, aided by the use of consistent, common vocabulary. As Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak suggest, successful teaching of writing for student transfer focuses on the writing skills that develop through successive learning experiences and a common vocabulary.

The concept of transfer is crucial for my research in three main ways. First, Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak provide a singular definition of transfer and its goals. Second, this understanding of transfer depends on the use of both prior knowledge and problem solving. Transfer requires that the students reflect back on their prior knowledge and use their writing skills in order to problem solve approaches to new writing assignments. Third, transfer roots itself in language. I argue that the source of contention for the transfer of writing skills into the postsecondary classroom is the change in language used to discuss academic writing. Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak's definition of transfer aids this paper by presenting reasonable expectations for how teachers may encourage students' transfer of their prior knowledge and writing skills from a secondary to a postsecondary classroom.

The focus on language is central to *What Is "College-Level" Writing?* —a collection by Patrick Sullivan and Howard Tinberg. They assert that preparing students for college-level writing is difficult first and foremost because college-level writing itself is a nuanced term. They mention that college administrators find “definitions related to college-level work are ‘fluid’ and that English teachers respond in some very predictable and pragmatic ways to enrollment realities...depending on enrollment trends, then college-level writing might be defined differently even by the same instructor or

department” (14). The fluidity of college-level writing hinted by college administrators suggests that college-level is that which challenges the collegiate student population, rather than a fixed, teachable standard for writing. Further, Sullivan and Tinberg argue “we have let college-level writing be defined for us by state and national legislatures”—alluding the CCSS and the WPA Outcomes Statement (18). Sullivan and Tinberg’s focus on the shifting perception of college-level writing and the inability to standardize the term reinforces the idea that the current standardization of writing via the governing standards does not benefit students. In my research, Sullivan and Tinberg provide a framework to discuss the perception of college-level writing, as well as the importance of developing a common definition for college-level writing.

The importance of a common understanding then applies directly to college writing assignments and genres, as presented in Dan Melzer’s study on college writing assignments titled *Assignments Across the Curriculum: A National Study of College Writing*. Melzer explores college writing assignments and their features—genre, audience, purpose, and requirements. When discussing genres at the college level, Melzer concludes the college research paper “was actually too diverse in this study to classify as a true genre” (108). Consequently, he suggests that the research paper is impossible to standardize. Research papers, instead, defy the restraints of genre because the research product depends primarily on the disciplines’ specific values and purposes. Therefore, a research paper in one course may be argumentative, in a second course strictly informative, and in a third tasked with creating an entirely new position. Research, then, as a written product submitted for evaluation, is as indeterminate as college-level writing itself. The expectation remains, however, that students fluently navigate the varied

expectations of research across disciplines. I chose Melzer's book as a representative of genre and writing assignment studies; this study also isolates research, on which I chose to focus. Melzer's discussion on the research genre adds to the ambiguity created when standardizing writing while also continuing to promote the importance of skill-based transfer.

With the foundation of transfer, college-level writing, and research, I turn to discussions on language difference between the secondary and post secondary writing standards. Ashley Rives and Allison Wynhoff Olsen provide a close reading of the CCSS compared to the WPA Outcomes Statement to articulate what precisely that language difference is. This article represents one of just a few that dives into how the language is different in the standards and why; other research merely acknowledges the language used in a high school writing class is different than that used in the college class. Rives and Olsen's publication is exemplary in contrast because it speaks to why students have difficulty moving their writing knowledge and skills into college classrooms. Other publications with a similar agenda fixate primarily on the application of rhetoric. The CCSS contend the writing standards scaffold the teaching of rhetoric; compositionists disagree. The CCSS use the word rhetoric a mere 6 times and does not appear explicitly in any of the writing standards (Rives and Olsen, 166). Compositionists argue that the implicit nature of rhetoric in the CCSS disserves students because explicit engagement with rhetoric is a central component of the first-year writing course sequence. Thus, the crux of my research on first-year writing echoes Rives and Olsen's belief that: "It is important for K-16 education to develop and use shared language in order for students to be successful and bridge the gap between high school and postsecondary education"

(168). Rives and Olsen’s analysis of the writing standards functions as a gateway into my research and analysis of both sets of writing standards.

My paper specifically examines research—both the written product and the process—and the writing standards for research. Allison Head’s work, “Learning Curve: How College Freshman Conduct Course Research Once They Enter College,” provides a study of first year students and their preferred research methods. Head notes that students, overwhelmed with new tasks and assignments, revert to the expectations and methods learned in high schools instead of applying the new approaches from first-year writing classes. Head’s study found that most students “found it difficult to figure out the critical inquiry process while developing competencies, practices, and workarounds for evaluating, integrating, and applying the sources they found” (3). This quote suggests that students struggle to adopt a “critical inquiry process,” the key distinction between high school and college-level writing. Other recurring themes from student interviews include feeling overwhelmed by topic selection freedom and strict source requirements; the shift to intellectual exploration from an informative approach; and the difficulty of implementing research-based writing in disciplines other than English. While Head primarily discusses how students access and use academic sources, her article provides student voices explaining the transition to college research processes. Further, Head’s article verbalizes what the results of my study show—students, overwhelmed with the language changes used in first-year writing classes, relapse into using high school level skills.

Student relapse into the skills and vocabulary from high school often occurs because the change in language used to address writing and its expectations. In their

article, “Locating the Terms of Engagement: Shared Language Development in Secondary to Postsecondary Writing Transitions,” Mark A. Hannah and Christina Saidy discuss the impact of the language used to teach writing from the perspective of teachers. Reflecting on a collaborative experience between college level writing instructors and secondary language arts teachers, the pair assert “that the two obstacles in the secondary to postsecondary transition are the secondary students’ lack of familiarity with the language college teachers use to discuss writing and college teachers’ lack of familiarity with the language secondary school teachers and students use to discuss writing” (121). The article revolves around this powerful statement. Of note, the quote groups secondary teachers and students together while college instructors occupy a separate group. The distinction in grouping places the responsibility with college instructors to guide students into the realm of college level work. The shift in responsibility contrasts with similar work in the field suggesting high school teachers adjust their practices to benefit postsecondary institutions. Hannah and Saidy’s work influences my research because it concludes with suggestions for collaboration between high school and college teachers that may prove effective based on the small scale study conducted for my research.

The scholarship presented in the literature reviewed here alludes to the importance of a shared language between high school and college writing curricula. Composition studies, including Sullivan and Tinberg’s collection, reports that students are unprepared for the rigor of college-level writing and do not readily transfer writing skills into college classrooms, as defined by Yancey and her collaborators. The scholarship extends to work, such as Melzer’s study on college assignments, that call for common definitions of terms and the importance of common expectations, as mentioned

in Head's study of first-year students' research processes. Recent scholarship in writing studies, exemplified by Hannah and Saïdy's publication, begins considering *why* students struggle to connect learning across the K-16 curriculum instead of merely considering *how* students struggle. Recently, compositionists like Rives and Olsen extended the discussion to include the CCSS and the WPA Outcomes Statement as the crux of the language divide between high school and college-level writing.

Despite the important work emerging in education and composition studies, the scholarship does not view students' lack of transfer as a side effect of standardization. It seems as if the next step for scholarship is to identify precisely what the language differences are, how they impact the teaching of writing and research, and why that language minimizes the number of skills students transfer into college writing courses. Drawing from current publications, my research presented here begins to address how transfer is complicated by the standardization of writing as established in the CCSS and WPA Outcomes Statement.

### **The CCSS and WPA Outcomes Statement Writing Standards**

The Common Core State Standards and the Writing Program Administration's Outcomes Statement for First-Year Writing establish writing curriculum for the K-12 and college classrooms, respectively. I contend the hindrance of student transfer resides in the wording of these governing standards. For the interest of my research, I limit the conversation to the teaching of research—both as a process and a final product. In this section of my paper, I first introduce the CCSS and their overarching objectives (listed in Appendix B). Second, I present the goals for research, either as a process or a final product, with a particular focus on the language used to construct the standard. I then

introduce the WPA Outcomes Statement in the same format (listed in Appendix A). Finally, I contrast the CCSS and WPA Outcomes Statement standards for writing and research, building on Rives and Olsen, to further exploit the lack of shared language between high school and college writing instruction.

### *Common Core State Standards*

The Common Core State Standards emerged from the desire to mandate and standardize education. Educators, administrators, and state leaders have been creating educational standards since the early 1990s at the state government level (“Development Process”). Ideally, the standards ensure students across the state are learning similar content and skills at similar developmental levels. The standards also define state graduation requirements and proficiency in content areas including math, reading, and writing. Eventually, the educational disparity between the 50 states was overwhelming and the compulsion for standardization grew. The development of the Common Core State Standards began in 2009 under the direction of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers; the Ohio State Board of Education adopted the CCSS in 2010 with full implementation beginning with the 2013-2014 school year (“Development Process”). The CCSS include a model curriculum from which standardized end-of-year exams are developed. The prescriptive approach to teaching and learning developed around anchor standards for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language which all gear toward college- and career-readiness. The CCSS aim to provide a highly-structure math and English language-arts based that prepare students for competitive college and career training.

The rigid nature of the CCSS, however, disserves students because it leads to “teaching to the test” instead of teaching to transfer, as Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak suggest. The pressure to succeed on the end-of-years exams has lead teachers to focus on data and publically posting standards in K-12 public school classrooms. Private schools, while still subject to end-of-year exams, allow their teachers greater freedom and authority to teach the content as best suited for their students’ needs. The CCSS, I contend, work best for populations in private schools because the CCSS serve more as developmental guidelines teachers can mold to best serve their students. Unfortunately, a majority of students are exposed to the inflexible approach of the CCSS fostered in public high schools. In public school environments, the CCSS teach students skills to accomplish a specific task rather than skills to apply to later learning. Theoretically, the CCSS demand student transfer since the K-12 standards build upon each other; realistically, the rigid implementation of the CCSS in classrooms and its standardized assessment fail to show students how to connect task-specific skills to other writing assignments.

The overwhelming focus on specific tasks required by the CCSS evident in the two writing standards addressing research—both as a process and a final product. Research appears presented in the CCSS across grade levels via one of the four writing subcategories: text types and purposes; production and distribution of writing; research to build and present knowledge; and range of writing. Notably, the CCSS classifies research as a method through which “to build and present knowledge,” proposing the purpose of research is to learn and to inform. The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts standards have two specific research aims. The first, listed as W. 11-12.7, addresses



research as a product and as a process. The second, referred to as W. 11-12.8, speaks to evaluating and using sources found via research. These two standards appear chronologically and together encapsulate expectations for college- and career- readiness research skills.

The first standard addresses the final research project and the process as interwoven. The standard, recorded as W. 11-12.7, standard asks students to:

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. (National Governors)

As presented, this standard asks students to become proficient in seven different writing tasks: conduct, answer, solve, narrow, broaden, synthesize, and demonstrate. In his book, Melzer suggests the tasks required by the verbs in this standard become variable changing by class and teacher, therefore making the writing task confusing to students. Consequently, in a classroom setting, teachers would need to break this standard into smaller, more manageable pieces for instruction as each sees fit, granting preference to teachers' interpretations of the standard. Here, Melzer's argument on genre as well as Sullivan and Tinberg's discussion on defining college-level writing appear because the standards become reliant on some degree of interpretation.

The standard on the implementation of research lends itself to interpretation that may also prefer assignments revolving around a student's ability to write to inform by providing a specific answer or specific solution. The standard addresses synthesizing

information from a variety of sources, but lacks a focus on inquiry and exploration despite the parenthetical reference to self-generated questions. The focus on writing to inform coupled with synthesizing multiple sources may lead students to believe the research process is hunting and pecking for information that validates a preformed answer to the question often articulated as a thesis statement. This approach to research eliminates the possibility of research as inquiry, as referenced in Head's study on first-year students' research processes. Ideally, this CCSS for research prescribes how students conduct research; realistically, this standard reduces research as a process to seven verbs and suggests that research is a method of supporting a predetermined answer.

The second CCSS addressing research for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade focuses evaluating sources to support the answer for which students are searching. The standard, referred to as W. 11-12.8, requests students:

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (National Governors)

This standard asks students to develop proficiency in research via 6 verbs: gather, use, assess, integrate, avoid, and follow. The prescriptive list of how to work with sources fails to include how to integrate information effectively, but instead requests attention to organization. The demand for organization "to maintain the flow of ideas" functions as a higher-order process vastly different from the other expectations of the standard.

Explicitly, the standard focuses on finding and evaluating sources. Consequently, the wording of the standard most likely leads toward digital source research, including Google or Google Scholar searches, in order to use “advanced searches effectively.” As Head’s study of first-year students’ research processes concluded, students utilize high school research methods—here specifically, the quick efficiency of Google searches—when overwhelmed with the higher-level thinking required in college-level writing.

The language of the standards guides students toward a prescriptive view of research that often causes confusion in the first-year writing classroom. More importantly to my research in connection with college-level writing, this CCSS writing standards validates Rives and Olsen’s contention: the CCSS ask for rhetorical analysis (“in terms of the task, purpose, and audience”) without explicitly the word rhetoric thereby diserving students when they transition to first-year writing courses. Instead, the standard places value on correctness—specifically on source integration and citation style. Therefore, high school students probably learn most about finding resources to support their position and citing the resources appropriately, rather than evaluating the effectiveness of the source. The CCSS provide a prescriptive approach to teaching across the K-12 curriculum without ensuring students possess either the ability to transfer writing skills or the vocabulary to discuss writing at the college level. For my research, the confusing, rigid structure of the 11-12 writing standards demonstrates why first-year writing students may struggle with research assignments. Further, the wording of the two standards relating to research as a product and process does not align with the college-level expectations articulated by the WPA Outcomes Statement.

*WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition*

At the college level, the learning outcomes for most first year writing programs are based on the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (listed in Appendix C). From observations about the variety and diversity of first-year writing programs across the nation, interested groups collaborated to establish the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA). In 2000, the CWPA crafted a set of outcomes—relying on both theory and practice—to articulate what students should know and what students should be able to do in order to write successfully for college courses. The Outcomes Statement, last updated and ratified in 2014, provides a “curricular document that speaks to the common expectations, for students, of first-year composition programs” (Harrington, et al. 323). The Outcomes Statement focuses on rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and composing; process; and knowledge of conventions. They define each focus, provide a rationale, and then list outcomes for the end of a first-year composition course. Beyond introductory writing courses, the document further suggests its use to faculty across the disciplines as a tool for furthering student learning and progress. Unlike the prescriptive nature and the model curriculum of the CCSS, the objective of the Outcomes Statement is to provide an overarching framework of expectations an institution can adopt to establish standard expectations for college-level writing.

Unlike the CCSS, the Outcomes Statement “defines only ‘outcomes,’ or types of results, and not ‘standards,’ or precise levels of achievement. The setting of standards to measure students’ achievement of these Outcomes has deliberately been left to local writing programs and their institutions” (“WPA Outcomes”). Therefore, the CWPA presents common goals and objectives for writing at the college level while allowing

institutions to create assessments best for their students. The Outcomes Statement also promote the ideal of continued, diversified learning that cannot be completed within the context of one course. They also provide common expectations for college-level writing and directly focus on a student's writing ability diversifying beyond the constraints of first-year writing. This attention to continuing skill development differs from the CCSS, which assume completion and college-readiness at grade 12.

The WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Writing does not directly discuss research as a product as the CCSS do; rather the Outcomes Statement treats research more rhetorically as a set of skills to be applied in appropriate writing situations. Two outcomes housed in the Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing category address research directly. Foundationally, critical engagement—thinking, reading, and composing—echoes Yancey and her collaborators premise that the writing classroom is about what the students are doing: “reading, thinking, responding, writing, receiving (feedback), and re-writing” (3). Research, then, is housed with the development of critical skills and constructs its purpose as a tool to learn, to inquire, and to support.

The first outcome addressing research proposes that students should:

use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts. (“WPA Outcomes Statement”)

While this outcome does not explicitly mention research, the outcome addresses the college-level purposes of research. The outcome pushes students to practice research as a tool for argument and inquiry, rather than just a method for gaining information. The process of creating a research paper, then, demands students read various texts to learn

about a topic, and engage with the topic critically in order to satisfy personal inquiry with a position or an argument. Unlike the CCSS focused on the final product, this outcome focuses on students' interactions with process. The greater emphasis revolves around the verb "use." Students should be able to use and practice skills in order to develop how they communicate their position. This outcome details the process students should adapt to write at the college-level and presents the foundation for engaging with research.

The second research-based outcome shifts to consider a part of the writing and research process: working with source material. The source asks that students:

Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias and so on) primary and secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and internet sources. ("WPA Outcomes Statement")

This outcome—along with many of the other skill-based outcomes—continues to focus on a student's rhetorical awareness and learning. The wording does not focus on students' ability to refine search terms or evaluate audience. In some regards, the language of this particular outcome seems more prescriptive since it provides a longer, more detailed list of acceptable source material. I contend, however, this outcome provides a broader list for student research in order to encourage students to engage with more diverse and more critical scholarship. The encouragement then drives students to practice critical engagement with research as both the process and the final product while moving beyond the checklist approach presented in the CCSS writing standards.

*The Language Divide between the CCSS and WPA Outcomes*

As both the CCSS and the CWPA Outcomes Statement are written, a disconnect exists between the teaching of research in secondary and postsecondary classrooms. While the CCSS stress the importance of correctness, the Outcomes Statement emphasizes the cultivation of learning and critical thinking via writing. Components of the Outcomes Statement rely on student transfer of material from high school—e.g. creating effective searches for online research. Holistically, the Outcomes Statement tend to see writing as a process that is skill-based and focused on student learning. Therefore, the Outcomes Statement’s goals surrounding research concentrate on critical inquiry and the process of research. The lack of these skills and a shared language in the CCSS and presents an obstacle for students when they graduate into a first year writing course with the CWPA Outcomes Statement’s goals.

Rives and Olsen contend that despite best intentions the CCSS do not align with college level expectations. Most crucially, “the absence of terms central to composition theory and practice may suggest a contrast between the CCSS and the expectations for what constitutes a college ready writer held by college writing teachers and administrators” (168). A student who understands in 12<sup>th</sup> grade that she must be aware of who is her reader grasps the rhetorical awareness of her audience. That same student, now moved into a first year writing course, may be exposed to the term rhetoric for the first time. Instead of transferring her knowledge and experience into this new setting, the student feels as if she is receiving completely new information. Therefore, the work of a first year writing instructor include not only instructing this student in college level writing but also providing her with the language to discuss writing itself. Rives and Olsen argue further that the implicit expectations rooted in the CCSS “assumes that

teachers are being taught rhetoric and composition practices in their undergraduate, preparatory programs...something that neither our experience nor current research reflects” (176). Considering the absence of courses dedicated to teaching writing<sup>1</sup>, high school teachers may feel less confident to teach or engage with critical writing. While Rives and Olsen speak explicitly to rhetoric, the broader implications of their position suggest the standards may be misaligned holistically and for the research paper.

As evidenced through the CCSS and WPA Outcomes relating to research as both a product and a process, writing and research are not taught using a similar language. The standards, created for the same reasons and defended by nationally recognized organizations, struggle to connect writing across the K-16 curriculum. The lack of similar language then establishes different purposes and objectives for research. The CCSS provide a prescriptive checklist, demanding multiple tasks and relying on teacher interpretation. The 11-12 writing standards, in particular, feature correctness in the presentation of the final product and citation style. In contrast, the WPA Outcomes Statement pushes students to focus on critical engagement with source material, composing a research paper, and the thought processes needed to perform each task. The college outcomes hope that students understand research and writing as tools to success, rather than merely products for evaluation. The lack of shared language on both ends must then create confusion for students as they progress from high schools standards to

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<sup>1</sup> Katie E. Ours researches writing instruction in teacher education programs as a part of her John Carroll University master’s essay, “‘I Learned It In My Methods Course’: How Secondary English/Language Arts Teachers Learn About Writing Instruction Before Their Graduation.” Ours explains that teachers do not have access to writing instruction and writing theory in ways that prepare them to work with high school students; instead, teachers rely on their own experiences and what Stephen North calls “lore” in writing instruction (25).



college outcomes. My research sought to prove the impact of the changing language in the first-year writing program at John Carroll University.

### **Methodology**

To learn more about how students enter first-year writing classes like mine, I conducted surveys of high school teachers, first-year college students, and college writing instructors to gather qualitative data regarding the teaching of writing and research. This section of my research provides a framing of my institution and experiences, a description of the small-scale study I conducted, and an overview of the expected results of the study.

As a graduate assistant at John Carroll University, I work with a number of students in the writing class and the Writing Center. John Carroll University is a private four-year college located 20 minutes east of Cleveland, Ohio. The 2016-2017 school year included over 3,000 undergraduate students and 500 graduate students (“JCU At A Glance”). The Jesuit university features over 70 academic programs of study, each stemming from an integrated, liberal arts core curriculum. English 125: Seminar to Academic Writing is a foundational course that began in the 2015-2016 school year. Capped at 16 students, this course serves as the foundation to higher-level writing within a broader writing across the curriculum initiative. EN 125 features five major assignments, concluding with a final portfolio. This course is a cornerstone of the integrative core curriculum and required of all students. EN 120-121 is the course sequence to complete the core requirement for students developmentally unprepared for EN 125. Students may only receive exemption from the requirement with a passing four

or five score on the Advanced Placement English exams or successful completion of a similar course at another institution (“Program Overview”).

As a graduate teaching assistant, I participated in EN 125 for one semester as a teaching assistant and next two semesters as an instructor. I also consult with students in the Writing Center, focusing on their writing and their writing assignments from across the curriculum and from first-year writing. I began graduate school after completing observation hours, teaching hours, and student teaching required by my undergraduate teaching licensure program for 7-12 English Language Arts. My exposure to high school students, high school teachers, EN 125 students, and EN 125 instructors suggested to me students have the ability to be prepared for college-level writing but something stood in the way. My tutoring and instruction of writing demanded my engagement with both the CCSS and the WPA Outcomes Statement. As I learned and implemented the standards and language expected of me, I became more aware of the fact my students did not have the same language to discuss their writing. These observations, coupled with my experiences with students like Michael, led me to my research.

For my project, I conducted a small-scale study to gather information from students, high school teachers, and college instructors to learn about the impacts of the misaligned writing standards. A small-scale study is pragmatic as it limits a research question to a manageable scope and timeline. The limited scope and timeline allow for completion of my research project as well as the possibility for continued investigation. This type of study benefitted my research in three ways. First, the size of the study limits the scope of my research and demands a specific focus with the CCSS and WPA Outcomes. Second, the scope of the study revolves around John Carroll University,

permitting me to engage with my anecdotal experience and learn further through a qualitative assessment of the first-year writing program in which I teach and tutor. Third, this small size of the study allows me to approach an emerging topic in composition studies scholarship with a specific, manageable perspective. Consequently, my research delineates a concern about the wording used to standardize writing curriculum, reviews the impact of the writing standards at my institution, and leaves space for further research and discussion.

In order to gather information, I designed and distributed surveys to high school teachers, first year writing instructors, and first year students at John Carroll University. The survey gathered background information, terms associated with research, and student preparedness for college level writing. Each survey was administered via Qualtrics survey and accompanied by an email explaining the purpose of this research (listed in Appendix D). A total of 131 of students, teachers, and instructors participated in this study.

For the purpose of examining the standards governing the teaching of writing, the study excludes private and religiously affiliated high schools where teachers and administration are granted freedoms from state standards on an instructional level. Public schools, by nature of their government funding, demand adherence to the CCSS in ways explicit to the instructor and the students. The survey was emailed to 31 public high schools in Ohio from which a large number of current, first-year students graduated according to the John Carroll University Admissions Office. 78 high school teachers responded. 42 high school teachers earned their degree in English while only 13 had taught at the college level.

I also contacted each English 125 instructor at John Carroll University to participate in the survey. As the instructors delivering EN 125 to our students, their participation grants access to how the WPA Outcomes impact writing at the college level. I chose to exclude instructors teaching EN 120 or EN 121, first-year writing courses designated for students not yet prepared for the mainstream English course. Of the 19 of instructors, eight responded. Six of the instructors earned a master's degree or higher; five have been teaching at the college level for over 20 years; and only four have ever taught at the high school level.

Finally, each student enrolled in EN 125 during the Fall 2016 semester received the survey via his or her instructor. At the point in which this survey was administered, students had completed four of the five major course assignments, including the research paper. The student survey limited participation to the fall semester since the cohort most recently graduated from high school and completed the EN 125 research paper. These students were in their first semester of college; therefore, there was little to no influence from writing instruction or assignments in other college courses. As with the EN 125 instructors, I chose to exclude students enrolled in EN 120 or EN 121 whose writing experiences were not typical. A total of 370 students enrolled across 30 sections of EN 125 were contacted; 44 students responded. 21 attended a private high school, 6 attended a charter or independent high school, and 14 attended a public high school.

## **Results**

I contend that the results of my survey confirm a language divide exists between the teaching of research at the secondary and postsecondary levels. First, the high school teachers' responses clarify the teaching of research revolves around working with sources

as well as the purpose of research to support predetermined student thesis statements. Their results also illuminate the undertone of discomfort teachers feel toward teaching writing as an independent content area. Second, the responses from college instructors suggest how students are unprepared for college-level writing and their need to develop more critical reading and writing skills. Finally, the first-year students' survey responses explain the differences between public and private high schools as related to the implementation of the CCSS. Holistically, the results of the surveys present information in three crucial areas: the lack of shared language between secondary and postsecondary teachers; the confusion regarding what the primary goals of research are; and the impact that the standardization of writing goals has on students moving into first-year writing.

To best understand the qualitative data presented, I chose to categorize the responses from each survey. The survey requires qualitative responses to allow the respondents to answer as clearly as possible. When I reviewed the survey results, I saw trends emerging within each survey group due to the skill-based nature of writing. I struggled, however, to articulate these trends because the wording used to discuss the trends varied between the populations. I established categories in order to translate responses and place them into groups based on the writing skills explained. The five categories create a system of organization for discussing the responses from high school teachers, first-year writing students, and college writing instructors.

The categories sort responses into the following: Citations and Formatting; Evaluating and Using Sources; Writing-as-a-Process; Writing-as-a-Product; and Student Variables. First, the Citations and Formatting responses refer to the correct application of a citation style—specifically MLA and APA—and developing an understanding of

plagiarism. Second, Evaluating and Using Sources describes methods of locating and evaluating secondary materials. The methods of locating research feature Google, Google Scholar, Wikipedia, and school databases. The evaluation of the sources centers on words such as “academic,” “credible,” “reliable,” and “scholarly.” Third, the Writing-as-a-Process category defines responses focused on students’ writing processes and the construction of specific written elements. The writing process involves brainstorming, prewriting, inventing, editing, revising, and reflecting. The most common written elements, as mentioned in the responses, include thesis statements, counterarguments, paragraphs, and sentence structure. In contrast, Writing-as-a-Product corresponds with comments that focus on grammatical correctness, elements of style, and assignment requirements (e.g. page length). Finally, a number of responses rely on Student Variables, such as “individual student motivation,” “buy-in,” and “ability.” This system of categorization allows me to translate the qualitative results of the three different surveys into a common language.

The system of categorizing survey responses demonstrates that similar writing skills are taught at both the high school and college levels. Further, the need for this system suggests that writing skills are taught using different wording and different perceptions based on the governing standards for writing curriculum. The categories first demonstrate how the word choice in teachers’ and instructors’ responses mimicked the standards each is expected to teach. For example, a strong correlation between the CCSS and the high school teachers’ responses focused on Locating and Evaluating Sources emerges. Within a survey group, the frequency of responses in any category then also implies a disparity between writing expectations at the high school and college levels.

Furthering the example, a focus on Locating and Evaluating Sources permeates high school teachers' responses while Writing-as-a-Process drives college instructors' responses. Overall, the responses to this survey confirm a lack of shared language between the two levels of education despite the similarity of the writing skills and therefore lead to a troublesome impact on students.

### *Responses from High School Teachers*

I surveyed teachers from 30 Ohio public high schools from which a number of John Carroll University students recently graduated. A total of 75 high school English teachers participated in this study. Of the respondents, 87% of the teachers have earned master's degree—42 teachers with degrees in English and 20 with degrees in education. On average, the respondents have taught for of 15 years. The high school teachers' survey results indicate research is taught with a significant reliance on Locating and Evaluating Sources and, consequently, on Citations and Formatting. The reliance on these writing skills directly links the teaching of writing to the language of the CCSS's research standards. Despite the CCSS's appeal of preparing students for college, many of these teachers believe their students lack the crucial skills for success in the college classroom.

One such skill teachers identified is Locating and Evaluating Sources. Over 50% of high school teachers responded that the primary purpose of the research is to support a student's thesis. The survey responses, as a result, tend to refer to Locating and Evaluating Sources that best support students' preplanned thesis statements as well as Citations and Formatting to properly attribute the sources. One survey question asked teachers to name the five words they use most when teaching research validates this finding. Of the 355 words contributed, 110 refer to Locating and Evaluating Sources and

another 100 to Citations and Formatting. Together, 60% of the words teachers named explicitly discuss working with and citing sources. The word “citation,” by itself, appears 50 times. Further, 40 adjectives contributed by teachers suggest how students evaluate their sources including: “credibility,” “reliability,” “scholarly,” and “validity.” Overall, these 210 words lead high school teachers to present research as a structured engagement with appropriate sources to benefit students’ theses.

The emergence of Locating and Evaluating Sources, as well as Citations and Formatting, reveals that the language high school teachers use to teach research comes from the CCSS. Specifically, the CCSS referred to as W. 11-12.8 requires students to “gather information,” “assess...each source,” and “[avoid] plagiarism.” The remaining 161 words refer to either Writing-as-a-Process or Writing-as-a-Product. Twelve verbs emerge: “analyze,” “argue,” “assert,” “consider,” “counter,” “discern,” “evaluate,” “explain,” “organize,” “prove,” “support,” and “synthesize.” Each verb asks students to complete a distinct, specific task. The variety of verbs contributes to the many approaches to teaching research in high schools, much like Melzer’s study of research at the college level. Therefore, the purpose of research to support student writing must then emerge from the wording of the CCSS and their implementation in the classroom.

Consequently, 52% of high school teachers responded that working with sources was the most challenging part of teaching research. Despite their intense focus on working with sources to teach research, however, 40% of the high school teachers believe their students are not prepared for college-level research. This percentage seems high. One teacher explains: “Though students write research papers in English class, this is typically their only exposure. One research paper a school year probably isn’t enough to maintain



these skills.” This comment points into the need for repeated practice as well as the intentional development of research skills. Another teacher rationalizes, “[the students] haven’t realized that the skills that are taught in English class are the same ones that they need to use in every other discipline.” The comment taps into students transferring writing skills across disciplines as well as education levels. Instead of housing writing and its skills in English Language Arts, students need instruction that guides them to transfer skills into other spaces. Both responses highlight the lack of transfer, as best defined by Yancey and her collaborators. The high school teachers, in these comments, recognize the little exposure to research skills, coupled with the shallow understanding of how to use the skills across the curriculum, leaves students without the practice needed to succeed.

Of the high school teachers who participated, 44% believe their students to be most prepared to succeed in Citations and Formatting at the college level. Contrastingly, 56% of the teachers named Writing-as-a-Process skills as the most crucial to master before college. Teachers cite, for example, “analysis,” “organization,” “revision,” and “developing critical thinking skills.” The survey here suggests that teachers are aware of the high level critical skills for college-level writing like “synthesis,” “analysis,” and “inquiry.” The teachers, however, focus their time on adhering to the standards so students leave K-12 education proficient in skills geared toward rote correctness and mechanics—specifically formatting a paper and creating appropriate citations. The intense focus on working with sources ultimately disserves the students. On the one hand, as one teacher commented, “[the students] are not close to resilient enough to handle a true college course.” The resiliency suggested points toward a focus on writing

as process—including multiple drafts, edits, and revisions often deemphasized in high schools because of time constraints. Students are moving into classrooms with an understanding of research as a checklist process with a mechanical focus instead of the skills for more critical thinking and engagement.

On the other hand, one teacher defends the position that students are prepared for college research papers “based on their writing assessments and standards-based rubrics.” I find this interesting because the mode of assessment is the “standards-based rubrics” created to measure a students’ development according to the CCSS progression. This teacher must then believe in the mission of the CCSS as pushing students toward college- and career- readiness. Another teacher supported this position admitting, “I know how much I have to do to scaffold the assignments, and I know every teacher in my department does basically the same thing.” The concept of scaffolding again points to faith in the CCSS to build on knowledge throughout K-12 education.

The correlation between high school teachers’ responses and the K-12 CCSS verifies that teachers explicitly teach the standards. Despite their students’ K-12 education, 40% of high school teachers believe students are not prepared to write research papers at the college level. This percentage appears high. The teachers’ awareness of how students are unprepared is the beginning of potential negotiations for shared language and practices for student transfer. The surveyed high school teachers, however, cannot grasp the ways in which their students are unprepared because college level writing is foreign to the teachers themselves.

Of the high school teachers who participated, 60 of the 75 have not taught at the college level, thereby distancing high school teachers from actual college-level writing.

While it is certainly not a requirement to have taught at one level to be effective at the other, pragmatic experience might help inform high school teachers' practices. Further, one teacher's comment frames an important factor in the teaching of writing: how teachers are taught to teach writing. One teacher confessed, "Personally, I struggle as an actual 'writing teacher.' I've had little development in this area and generally try the best I can with the tools I have." It is important to consider that high school teachers have not had the same preparation to teach writing as a college instructor. Rives and Olsen mention the disparity of writing-centered courses in teacher education which may deter high school teachers from engaging with writing. Writing instruction is then adapted to meet teachers' skill and the students' need, much as Sullivan and Tinberg suggests with defining college-level writing. Further, teachers may avoid substantial engagement with the writing curriculum since writing is only one component of the literature-based high school English classes. Regardless of their background, high school English teachers are required to teach writing as presented in the CCSS.

Unlike their knowledge of the CCSS, 65% of the respondents did not know any governing bodies exist to guide first-year writing programs. For the 20 respondents who were aware, only one named a correct organization of the CWPA. One teacher confessed: "You called my bluff, I just assumed." Other guessed suggesting "the institution," "[something] directed by the state of Ohio," and "accreditation boards." As this survey demonstrates, high school teachers acknowledge their students are not prepared for the rigor of research at the college level; at the same time, the teachers are unaware of how research is being taught at the college level. Consequently, these high school teachers are

suffering from the lack of shared language in the writing standards. Therefore, they are not in a position to begin explicitly teaching research to transfer.

Overall, the survey results from high school teachers suggest the teaching of writing and research does not receive the amount of time needed for effective instruction. Teachers cited time, other obligations, timed testing, and workload as barriers to teaching writing that is informed by scholarly research and practice. These survey results instead suggest a focus on mechanical skill and a prescriptive approach to working with sources. This reflects the standards' idea "integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation" (National Governors). The survey also demonstrates a tendency to frame research as a method of locating support. This purpose for research aligns with the standards' wording: "Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem" (National Governors). Consequently, the survey shows little attention to other sections of the standards, including: "assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience." While high school research focuses on evaluating sources, the survey shows sources are evaluated for reliability, credibility, and validity rather than for their rhetoric. The survey also points to the absence of research as inquiry based. These absences are relevant to my argument because these missing skills are those cited by teachers as most critical to learn before college. The survey indicates higher level skills may be written into the standards but are not the primary focus on classroom instruction, therefore hindering the transition to college-level writing.

*Results from College Writing Instructors*

Speaking to the college level, eight John Carroll University first year writing instructors participated in this survey. Each holds a degree in English—75% with a master’s degree or doctorate. The remaining 25% of respondents are graduate teaching assistants working toward a master’s degree in English. Of these instructors, 60% have been teaching at this level for 20 or more years; half have experience teaching at the high school level. The overall responses primarily focused on the research process as way to learn critical skills—critical thinking, critical reading, critical writing. As one instructor commented, “They can clearly identify WHAT the aspects of ‘good academic writing’ are, because their teachers have used that language in high school classrooms as a way to set up expectations of college professors.” Instructors assess that students are aware of these critical skills. Implied in this comment, however, is that students do not yet possess those critical skills.

Unlike their secondary school counterparts, half reported their students might or might not be” prepared to writing research papers at the college level. One instructor explain, “Most of my students have said that they wrote research papers in high school that required research; so they are familiar with the genre, but perhaps need to be pushed more to develop an appropriately-sophisticated topic and framework.” This comment relies on a common understanding of genre, resisting Melzer’s notion that the research paper defies genre conventions. Regardless, this comment seems to best represent the college instructors view on student preparedness. The instructors also used research as a tool to develop overall writing skills but 43% of instructors defined the primary purpose of research as to learn.

The skills of critical reading and critical thinking dominated the list of most

crucial writing skill to master before college. Instructors listed “critical reading,” “learning to think objectively,” and “articulate a response, argument, or interpretation as the starting point for further development.” The list suggests that college-level reading and writing differs from secondary writing and research because of the emphasis on these critical skills. Contrary to the list, instructors also selected “MLA/documentation” and “grammar.” I did not anticipate the focus on citation and format correctness to be as prevalent at the college level. College instructors noted that students were generally least prepared to “construct sophisticated rhetorical claims” and move beyond the five-paragraph essay. However, when asked why their students are not prepared to write research papers at the college level, the instructors reverted to comments on citation and formatting. One instructor commented, “when they turned in their drafts of their research papers, more than half did not turn in a Works Cited page not did they use in-text citations.” I find this particularly interesting since the high school teachers found citation and formatting as a sense of pride and commented that students are instead underprepared to create and sustain an argument.

The trend toward mechanical correctness appeared very little in the overall responses from instructors. Instead, the responses seem to focus on moving beyond the mechanical. For example, when asked what the most challenging part of teaching research is, half of the responses focused on depth. One instructor discussed the struggle of teaching the depth of the research process; another the depth of reading sources; and the last the depth of the skills to transfer beyond an English classroom. This trend continued when considering what students are least prepared for. Over 60% responded that students lack the critical reading and writing skills to enter into an academic

conversation. Worded as “sophisticated rhetorical claims,” “meticulous nature of writing,” and “cohesion,” the college instructors are aware that their first year students do not yet have the depth of college-level writing.

Though aware of how their students are unprepared, first year instructors did not seem aware of why their students are unprepared. Exactly half of the college instructor did not know there is a governing body that determines English high school curriculum. Considering these instructors noted their students were not prepared to write at the college level, I anticipated the college instructors would be more aware of the K-12 standards. Of the instructors who were aware of the standardized content, each identified the governing body by name. Naming the standards suggests that first-year writing instructors have an awareness of the standardization and prescriptive nature of high school writing.

#### *The Difference in High School Teachers’ and College Instructors’ Responses*

Separately, the responses from high school teachers and college instructors show some connection between teachers’ response and the writing standards they teach. The results of the surveys present information in three crucial areas: the lack of shared language between secondary and postsecondary teachers; the confusion regarding what the primary goals of research are; and impact of this misalignment on students. The survey results present instances where the high school teachers and college instructors speak to the same topic and goals using disjointed wording. Applied to classroom instruction, the disjointed approach to writing ultimately impacts the students. The side effects of standardization and the lack of shared writing appear in the students’ responses to the survey. The responses express, for example, frustration with “fulfilling the rhetoric

more effectively.” The response itself demonstrates the student’s difficulty to speak fluently about college-level writing. The lack of shared language between high school and college writing standards place the teachers and the students at odds with each other.

Secondary and postsecondary teachers speak of writing and research in different ways, creating separating one group from the other. The most prevalent cause of the language difference is the standards that govern writing. The standards themselves are worded differently; further, there is some expectation that teachers and instructors use the wording of the standards to inform their instruction. Rives and Olsen contend the same point in their research focused on the use of the word rhetoric. The secondary cause of the language difference is the ignorance of the other standards. As the survey attests, 42% of college instructors were unaware of the CCSS while 64% of the high school teachers were unaware that first year writing had governing principles at all. Further, even if teachers and instructors were aware of the governing standards, that still does not prove familiarity with the content and wording. The lack of familiarity echoes in the survey results. For example, the survey shows high school teachers focused on working heavily with sources and citation while college instructors explore the writing process.

Therefore, the K-16 education discussed in current education and composition studies disrupts student learning because there is a disconnect between what high schools privilege and what colleges privilege in terms of writing. Students learn research as unified by the CCSS in K-12 education; then, students are seemingly asked to learn research again from college. Without similar language and similar goals, students are unable to transfer their writing knowledge. Standardization of writing goals has aligned



skills and wording on either side but deteriorated students' ability to transfer across a divide rooted in language.

The primary goals of research also appear to be misaligned. While high school teachers use research as a way to support one's position, college instructors use research to learn. The responses from high school teachers suggest research means hunting through related material and picking the material that answers the question or solves the problem on which the student has already decided. Research then is reading sources to benefit one stance. This type of research guides students through a process within the time and testing constraints at the high school level. Further, as one teacher confessed, "My kids are not prepared to work alone. I hold their hands too much during research assignments. They never truly master the skills because we don't have enough time to do enough projects to master these skills." At the college level, research provides opportunities to learn about a broad topic in order to master skills. Research then challenges students to identify ways into the academic conversation regarding the topic. The students are also responsible for establishing their viewpoints and narrowing the scope of their topics. The challenges of writing at the college-level may feel more challenging because of the lack of shared language between K-12 education and college education. Therefore, students need to negotiate a new dialect to discuss writing and to further develop research skills at the college level.

#### *Results from First-Year Writing Students*

The misalignment in the language of the CCSS and the WPA outcomes negatively affects how students understand the expectations for their writing. The focus and attention on standards and testing influences a public high school, its teachers, and its

students as evidenced by the survey. Consequently, significant discrepancies emerge when contrasting the results of the public schools graduates and the private school graduates. For example, 55% of the private school graduates felt most prepared for the research paper in EN 125; only 36% of public school graduates felt the same. The results of the survey indicate that first-year students from public high schools ranked feeling less prepared for the research paper expectations, less prepared for academic research, and less prepared overall for college-level writing than their private school peers.

When responding to my survey, only 63% of public school graduates said they felt prepared for writing in EN 125, compared to 85% of private school graduates. The survey results suggest some similar expectations for constructing the research paper as a final product for assessment. For example, both public and private school students wrote, on average, research papers totaling six to seven pages in high schools. Public school student engaged with about 4 sources per paper while private school students juggling an average of 8 sources. Students from each school population also mentioned the focus on appropriate formatting and correct citations. Noticeably, how students engaged with the process of research in high school varies greatly. In terms of sources, 55% of public high school graduates confess to using Wikipedia when researching while only half engaged with books or academic journals. In contrast, 80% of their peers used books or academic journals. Further, six of the 20 of public high school graduates claimed they did not learn how to write research papers before EN 125. The responses of these six students imply the absence of explicit writing instruction. Overall, these survey results from first semester freshman speak to the disparity in writing confidence and preparedness.

The two student groups also responded quite differently when discussing the research paper and process. Public high school students listed words that discussed the research process. Of the 50 words, 26 spoke to citations and sources; 13 discussed an emotional reaction including, “annoying,” “boring,” “pointless,” and “saddening.” The majority of these students found locating and analyzing sources as the easiest part of the research process. The most challenging parts included “finding good sources,” “understanding the sources,” and “not knowing where the info is coming from.” Survey results from public high school students suggest these students learn mostly about working with sources and reflects the standards idea “avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.” The focus on sources from public high school graduates relates to my argument because it shows that education in public schools features a prescriptive approach to writing based on the wording of the CCSS that does not benefit the transition to college-level writing. This contributes to my argument because it provides an example of how standardization impacts the teaching and learning of writing.

Private high school students, on the other hand, provided only 44% of words that referred to citations and sources. Eleven words did refer to emotional reactions; however, these included “hard work,” “disciplined,” “time consuming,” and “creativity.” These students also found the easiest part of the research paper to be locating sources, narrowing the topic, and organizing the information. Comments for the most challenging part of the research process included, “crafting an effective argument,” “finding credible sources that fit well with the essay,” and “organizing everything.” The survey results here suggest that private school students learn from a more holistic approach to writing that is

not echoed in the CCSS. Therefore, unlike their public school peers, private school students are granted some separation from the explicit wording and prescriptive nature of the CCSS that better prepare them to transfer writing skills into a college classroom.

In reviewing the survey responses from both public and private high school graduates, the skills most impacted by the misaligned wording between the high school writing standards and college-level writing standards come into focus. Particularly, the opposition between the public high school graduates—focused on mechanical skills and correctness—and the private high school graduates—focused instead on the process of writing and researching. The opposition occurs first because the lack of shared language between secondary and postsecondary writing standards. The misalignment between the two levels of schools is further confused when defining what the primary goals of research are. High school teachers teach research to support a position; college instructors teach research to learn holistically about a topic. The distinction between the purposes of the research genre highlights Sullivan and Tinberg, as well as Melzer. The challenge of defining the abstract expectations of writing leads to a variety of interpretations for “college-level writing” and the “research paper.” The writing standards inform these variations and result in distinct languages, as discussed by Hannah and Saidy. High school teachers work within the distinct language established by the CCSS while college writing instructors implement the WPA Outcomes. The lack of shared language, as articulated by Rives and Olsen’s reading of the standards, then impacts the students and their ability to transfer, as defined by Yancey and her collaborators. As public and private high school graduates, first year students enter college with a secondary-level word bank and understanding of genre that need to transform into a college-level vocabulary and

critical skills. Unfamiliar with the language and expectations of college-level writing, students revert to high school research skills, as evidence by my survey and Head's research, in order to research within the high school language with which they are more fluent.

## **Conclusion**

Most EN 125 students—much like my student Michael, whose story I told in the introduction—may not recognize the need for a first-year writing course. Yet after 16 weeks of EN 125, when Michael and I reviewed his final portfolio, he confessed something to me. Michael stopped to thank me. He mentioned he neither experienced a course focused on writing, nor felt as if he learned from writing until he took EN 125. Michael's confession connects to the results of the small-scale study conducted here, and this study points to more moments like the one between Michael and me. Students will challenge why EN 125 is required, but students will also find that college-level writing is not what they had anticipated. While standards like the CCSS gear students toward college- and career-readiness, EN 125 remains necessary more than ever because the language used to express these writing standards is misaligned between the Common Core State Standards and the Council of Writing Program Administrations' Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition.

One high school teacher concludes the survey commenting on this misalignment: "We've regressed over time because of bureaucracy and high-stakes testing." I concur. I find that the standardization imposed by governing bodies and a high-stakes testing culture causes side effects exemplified when students move from high school to college writing classrooms. I contend students have difficulty transferring their K-12 writing

knowledge into college classrooms because the standards' wording shifts. Without using a similar language, students enter college classrooms confused and are therefore less likely to make connections to prior knowledge. In defining terms like transfer, college-level writing, and research, I suggest that writing is an ambiguous field. The analysis of the Common Core State Standards and the Writing Program Administration's Outcomes Statement pinpoint instances of misaligned language, making writing even more ambiguous for students. The results of and discussion on the study of high school teachers, EN 125 instructors, and EN 125 students demonstrates that the lack of shared language hinders student transfer of writing skills.

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Appendix A  
WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (3.0),  
Approved July 17, 2014

*The most recent version (3.0) of the WPA Outcomes Statement can now be downloaded as a PDF (at the bottom of this page). Further information about the process used to revise the statement and the reasons for those revisions appears in WPA: Writing Program Administration 38.1 (Fall 2014): 129-143.*

### **Introduction**

This Statement identifies outcomes for first-year composition programs in U.S. postsecondary education. It describes the writing knowledge, practices, and attitudes that undergraduate students develop in first-year composition, which at most schools is a required general education course or sequence of courses. This Statement therefore attempts to both represent and regularize writing programs' priorities for first-year composition, which often takes the form of one or more required general education courses. To this end it is not merely a compilation or summary of what currently takes place. Rather, this Statement articulates what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory.[1] It intentionally defines only "outcomes," or types of results, and not "standards," or precise levels of achievement. The setting of standards to measure students' achievement of these Outcomes has deliberately been left to local writing programs and their institutions.

In this Statement "composing" refers broadly to complex writing processes that are increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies. Writers also attend to elements of design, incorporating images and graphical elements into texts intended for screens as well as printed pages. Writers' composing activities have always been shaped by the technologies available to them, and digital technologies are changing writers' relationships to their texts and audiences in evolving ways.

These outcomes are supported by a large body of research demonstrating that the process of learning to write in any medium is complex: it is both individual and social and demands continued practice and informed guidance. Programmatic decisions about helping students demonstrate these outcomes should be informed by an understanding of this research.

As students move beyond first-year composition, their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, their abilities will diversify along disciplinary, professional, and civic lines as these writers move into new settings where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge. Therefore, this document advises faculty in all disciplines about how to help students build on what they learn in introductory writing courses.

### **Rhetorical Knowledge**

*Rhetorical knowledge* is the ability to analyze contexts and audiences and then to act on that analysis in comprehending and creating texts. Rhetorical knowledge is the basis of composing. Writers develop rhetorical knowledge by negotiating purpose, audience, context, and conventions as they compose a variety of texts for different situations.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should*

- Learn and use key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes
- Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure
- Understand and use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences
- Match the capacities of different environments (e.g., print and electronic) to varying rhetorical situations

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- The expectations of readers in their fields
- The main features of genres in their fields
- The main purposes of composing in their fields

### **Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing**

*Critical thinking* is the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts. When writers think critically about the materials they use—whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials—they separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and generalizations. These practices are foundational for advanced academic writing.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should*

- **Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts**
- Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to the interplay between verbal and nonverbal elements, and to how these features function for different audiences and situations
- **Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias and so on) primary and secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and internet sources**
- Use strategies—such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign—to compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- The kinds of critical thinking important in their disciplines

- The kinds of questions, problems, and evidence that define their disciplines
- Strategies for reading a range of texts in their fields

### **Processes**

Writers use multiple strategies, or *composing processes*, to conceptualize, develop, and finalize projects. Composing processes are seldom linear: a writer may research a topic before drafting, then conduct additional research while revising or after consulting a colleague. Composing processes are also flexible: successful writers can adapt their composing processes to different contexts and occasions.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should*

- Develop a writing project through multiple drafts
- Develop flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing
- Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover and reconsider ideas
- Experience the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- Learn to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress
- Adapt composing processes for a variety of technologies and modalities
- Reflect on the development of composing practices and how those practices influence their work

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- To employ the methods and technologies commonly used for research and communication within their fields
- To develop projects using the characteristic processes of their fields
- To review work-in-progress for the purpose of developing ideas before surface-level editing
- To participate effectively in collaborative processes typical of their field

### **Knowledge of Conventions**

*Conventions* are the formal rules and informal guidelines that define genres, and in so doing, shape readers' and writers' perceptions of correctness or appropriateness. Most obviously, conventions govern such things as mechanics, usage, spelling, and citation practices. But they also influence content, style, organization, graphics, and document design.

Conventions arise from a history of use and facilitate reading by invoking common expectations between writers and readers. These expectations are not universal; they vary by genre (conventions for lab notebooks and discussion-board exchanges differ), by discipline (conventional moves in literature reviews in Psychology differ from those in English), and by occasion (meeting minutes and executive summaries use different registers). A writer's grasp of conventions in one context does not mean a firm grasp in another. Successful writers understand, analyze, and negotiate conventions for purpose, audience, and genre, understanding that genres evolve in response to changes in material conditions and composing technologies and attending carefully to emergent conventions.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should*

- Develop knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising
- Understand why genre conventions for structure, paragraphing, tone, and mechanics vary
- Gain experience negotiating variations in genre conventions
- Learn common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts
- Explore the concepts of intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions
- Practice applying citation conventions systematically in their own work

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- The reasons behind conventions of usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and citation systems in their fields or disciplines
- Strategies for controlling conventions in their fields or disciplines
- Factors that influence the ways work is designed, documented, and disseminated in their fields

Ways to make informed decisions about intellectual property issues connected to common genres and modalities in their fields.

Appendix B  
English Language Arts Standards » Writing » Grade 11-12

Standards in this strand:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

The CCR anchor standards and high school grade-specific standards work in tandem to define college and career readiness expectations—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity.

**Text Types and Purposes:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1 ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/))

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/A/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/A/))

Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/B/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/B/))

Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.C ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/C/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/C/))

Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.D ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/D/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/D/))

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.E ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/E/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/1/E/))

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2 ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/))

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.A ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/A/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/A/))

Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.B ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/B/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/B/))

Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.C ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/C/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/C/))

Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.D ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/D/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/D/))

Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.E ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/E/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/E/))

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.F ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/F/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/2/F/))

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3 ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/))

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.A ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/A/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/A/))

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.B ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/B/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/B/))

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.C ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/C/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/C/))

Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/D/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/D/))

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.E ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/E/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/3/E/))

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

### **Production and Distribution of Writing:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4 ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/4/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/4/))

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5 ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/5/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/5/))

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grades 11-12 here (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/11-12/>)).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6 ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/6/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/6/))

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

### **Research to Build and Present Knowledge:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7  
([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/7/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/7/))

**Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8  
([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/8/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/8/))

**Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9 ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/9/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/9/))



Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9.A ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/9/A/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/9/A/))

Apply grades 11-12 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics").

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9.B ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/9/B/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/9/B/))

Apply grades 11-12 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., The Federalist, presidential addresses]").

**Range of Writing:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10 ([HTTP://WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/10/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-LITERACY/W/11-12/10/))

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## En 125 Instructor Survey

### *Background*

What is your highest level of education?

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD

Which field is your degree in?

- English
- Education
- Other

How long have you been teaching English at the college level?

Do you have any formal teacher training?

Have you ever taught English at the high school level?

### *Research*

I primarily teach research as

- Informative
- Argumentative
- Both informative and argumentative

My students research using primarily

- Wikipedia
- Google
- Google Scholar
- Library/School Databases
- Books, journals

Five key words I use when teaching research are:

The primary purpose of research is:

The most challenging part of teaching research is:

### *Students*

What are your students least prepared for in terms of writing at the college level? Why?

What are your students most prepared for in terms of writing at the college level? Why?

In your opinion, what is the most crucial skill for a student to master before beginning college?

Overall, are your students prepared to write research at the college level?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Might or might not
- Probably not
- Definitely not

Why do you believe your students are prepared at this level?

*High School/College*

To your knowledge, is there a governing body or document that determines the content a high school English teacher teaches?

- Yes
- No

What is the name of the governing body?

Is there anything else you would like to add about the teaching of writing and research at the college level?

## High School Teacher Survey

### *Background*

Where do you teach high school?

- In a private school
- In a public school
- In a charter or other independent school

What is your highest level of education?

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD

Which field is your degree in?

- English
- Education
- Other

How long have you been teaching English at the high school level?

Have you ever taught English at the college level?

### *Research*

I primarily teach research as

- Informative
- Argumentative
- Both informative and argumentative

My students research using primarily

- Wikipedia
- Google
- Google Scholar
- Library/School Databases
- Books, journals

Five key words I use when teaching research are:

The primary purpose of research is:

The most challenging part of teaching research is:

### *Students*

What are your students least prepared for in terms of writing at the college level? Why?

What are your students most prepared for in terms of writing at the college level? Why?

In your opinion, what is the most crucial skill for a student to master before beginning college?

Overall, are your students prepared to write research at the college level?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Might or might not
- Probably not
- Definitely not

Why do you believe your students are prepared at this level?

*High School/College*

To your knowledge, is there a governing body or document that determines the content a college first year writing instructor teaches?

- Yes
- No

What is the name of the governing body?

Is there anything else you would like to add about the teaching of writing and research at the high school level?

## EN 125 Student Survey

### *Background*

I am currently taking

- EN 125
- EN 120

In high school, I took

- On level English courses
- Honors English courses
- AP English courses

I graduated from

- A private high school
- A public high school
- A charter, online, or other independent high school

### *Research*

Did you learn to write research papers in high school?

- Yes
- No

Which types of research papers were you asked to write?

- Informative
- Argumentative
- Both informative and argumentative
- Not sure.

How many pages were the research papers you write in high school?

How many sources did you typically use in a research paper?

When researching for a paper, I use:

- Wikipedia
- Google
- Google Scholar
- Library/School Databases
- Books, journals
- Other

Five key words I think of when I think of research are:

The primary purpose of research is:

The most challenging part of researching is:

### *EN 125*

I felt prepared for writing in EN 125

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Which assignment were you MOST prepared for?

- They Say: Summary & Argument Analysis
- I Say: Summary, Argument Analysis, and Personal Opinion
- Research Paper
- Academic Literacy Narrative
- Portfolio

Which assignment were you LEAST prepared for?

- They Say: Summary & Argument Analysis
- I Say: Summary, Argument Analysis, and Personal Opinion
- Research Paper
- Academic Literacy Narrative
- Portfolio

I felt prepared for writing a research paper for EN 125.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

What was the easiest part of the research paper?

What was the most challenging part of the research paper?