

**CESA 10 Language Arts
Curriculum Articulation Working Group
Final Report**

English Language Arts
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Introduction

The aim of this report is to present the findings of the Language Arts Curriculum Articulation working group. Carrying out the charge assigned to the working groups, we sought to identify the gaps and redundancies in skills and knowledge between the curriculum of secondary language arts and freshmen composition. However, midway through this process we revised the focus of our working group. By the end of our second working group meeting (April 26, 2000), we found that we had little to discuss about gaps and redundancies in our respective curriculum.

In general, our finding is that the secondary language arts curriculum furnishes most students with the skills and knowledge necessary to enter college composition. Indeed, our finding corroborates the UW System report, “Wisconsin Alignment Project” (1999):

There is considerable congruence among the documents in English language arts . . . A curriculum based on the WMAS would prepare a student to meet admission requirements of UWS institutions . . . it would also prepare students for the content of the English Placement Test. (p. 9)

This is not to say, though, that we find no articulation issues. We believe that our work illuminates an additional and important definition to curriculum articulation. On the basis of our work together for 10 months, we conclude that it is important for high school and college teachers to better understand the similarities and differences of reading and writing and teaching and learning in each other’s respective institution. For example, we found that high school teaches the skills necessary for success in college composition; in this respect, there is similarity. However, college students consistently

reported that college composition classes taught them to use reading and writing in ways different than those ways taught in high school. From the students reports, we learned that the culture of college literacy presents intellectual problems, topics, methods of inquiry, genres and patterns of organization that are different than what students have previously learned. We learned that in college writing classes the different ways of using reading and writing frustrated some students and challenged others.

The college students saw these differences as either evidence of a gap or as evidence of the challenges of learning. For some students, encountering new and challenging ways of reading and writing in college meant that their high school teacher had not prepared them. For example, “Why didn’t they teach me this in high school?” was a familiar complaint about learning to use MLA documentation, college library databases, new patterns of organization, and complex, thesis-driven essay structures. On the other hand, many students recognized that they were learning new ways of using familiar skills, and that these new tasks were the challenges of learning the culture of reading, writing, questioning, and thinking in a college setting.

Given these general findings, we offer an additional definition to *curriculum articulation*. In addition to *curriculum articulation* meaning the alignment of skills and competencies, we suggest adding the following: *curriculum articulation* also means working to understand the similarities and the *necessary* differences between high school and college ways of learning and teaching, reading and writing. To be clear, this is not an argument for making high school more like college, or vice versa (unlike what some students recommended to us!) Rather, we find the cultures of high school and college share skills and knowledge, but secondary and post-secondary education put skills and

knowledge to use in ways and for purposes that are necessarily different. Curriculum articulation, in this additional sense for which we argue, means helping students to grow into and participate in different and sometimes strange culture of literacy.

Meeting Dates & Minutes

The focus and frame of our work developed over a period of five meetings of the working groups. Following is a brief account of the agenda and outcome of each meeting.

February 3, 2000, The Dells

At this meeting, we decided to survey students in English 12 and English 110 classes. The aim of the survey was for students to report what skills and knowledge for which they felt prepared or underprepared.

March 8, 2000, UWEC

At this meeting, we reviewed and discussed findings from the first surveys. The high school faculty surveyed students in a college preparation track. The university survey included 486 students. Generally, students reported that college writing instruction did not present a wholly unfamiliar curriculum, but that the pace, the rigor, the forms of writing, and the critical acumen were unfamiliar.

April 26, 2000, UWEC

At this meeting, we shared and discussed syllabi, outlines, and assignments. Our aim was to see if we could identify specific knowledge, skills, standards and competencies that were either redundant or simply unaccounted for between high school and college level writing. At this meeting, we refocused our work, aiming now to better understand the contexts of teaching, learning, and literacy in high school and college writing classes. Toward this, we simplified the college survey by not asking questions specific to competencies and standards, and instead asking college students to report specifically the areas in which they felt to be prepared or underprepared by their high

schools. In other words, we wanted to find out what students saw as the competencies necessary for success in English 110.

October 25, 2000, UWEC

We reviewed the findings from the second survey. This survey confirmed the findings of the first one: that is, almost 75% of the students in English 110 reported that they were prepared by their high school English classes.

December 6, 2001, UWEC

For our final meeting, we sought to understand high school students' perceptions of college reading and writing. Toward this, 12 senior students visited English 110 classes in the morning, and then met to discuss their perceptions.

Sources of Information and Data Collected

The aim of our data collection was to find out students' perceptions and understandings of the similarities and differences of the English language arts in high school and college curriculum. Toward this, we twice surveyed English 110 students. The first survey, conducted in late February, had 486 participants. The second survey, conducted in late April, had 519 participants.

We also wanted to understand high school students' perceptions and expectations about college level writing instruction. Thus, in March 2000, we administered a questionnaire to high school students in college preparation and A.P. English classes. Finally, in an attempt to obtain a more fine-grained and specific account of high school students' perceptions and expectations of college writing and reading, we invited twelve high school seniors to attend writing and literature classes at UWEC, and then participate

in focus group discussions, sharing their perceptions of teaching and learning in a college classroom.

Findings and Analysis

English 110 Students: Sets of Contradictions

At first glance, the findings from the two surveys of English 110 students are contradictory. Students reported that the college instruction they found redundant also taught the skills about which they felt most uncertain and underprepared. For example, English 110 students reported that instruction in mechanics and grammar were redundant, but at the same time, they reported lack of preparation in grammar and mechanics.

Another set of contradictions concerned writing processes. Students reported that high school teachers prepared them in the “process of writing,” but students also noted that they were unfamiliar with how to revise their written work for college teachers.

Similarly, the students reported that their high school teachers gave them challenging reading assignments, but they then reported they were unprepared for reading critically and analytically in their college classes. Students reported that they were already familiar with using a library to carry out research, and that they were familiar with documentation.

However, they reported being unfamiliar with MLA documentation, and unfamiliar with the kinds of databases and academic sources they were introduced to in their English 110 classes. Finally, college students suggest high school teachers should provide more instruction in research processes and MLA style documentation of sources. However, not surprisingly, many students also indicated they had been given instruction in preparing researched papers in high school.

A Spiral Curriculum

The contradictions in this data can be viewed as an example of what is known as a spiral curriculum in the English language arts. A spiral curriculum presents tasks, skills, and knowledge to students in increasingly sophisticated and complex levels and degrees. The curriculum does not simply progress linearly from one goal to the next, but rather, the competencies of literacy are ever-present, but in increasingly sophisticated and challenging forms. Thus, students' reports of familiarity and lack of preparation in English 110 may be instances of encountering a familiar literacy activity but in a context that has more challenging aims.

Backreading

College students had much to say to us in both surveys when they were asked to write down what they were "unprepared" for in English 110. In each survey, approximately half of the students wrote comments. Our analysis produced the following themes in their responses:

- Students were unprepared for the purposes and forms of college level writing.
- Students were unprepared for the workload, pace, and complexity of college writing.
- Students were unprepared for college teachers' expectations for knowledge and control of usage and mechanics.
- Students were unprepared for analytical, critical thinking, reading, and writing.
- Students were unprepared to do college level library research and to use MLA documentation.
- Students recommended that more writing and different types of writing be provided in the high school curriculum. (Students reported that they were most familiar with writing five paragraph essays, creative writing, and autobiographical narratives.)
- Students specifically noted the repetition of autobiographical writing and the absence of argumentative writing.

Specifically, we think that students' responses to the question: "What could English 12 do to better prepare you for English 110" are *backreading*. By this we mean that students perceive English 12 in terms of what they are learning in English 110. The unstated assumption on their part is "If I were taught this in high school, I wouldn't have to be learning it now." In other words, college students' recommendations to the high school teachers mistakes what they are learning in English 110 with what they think they should have been taught in English 12.

Finally, to rebut the college students' view that challenge and difficulty in English 110 indicates failure in high school preparation, we offer their comments: that is, their accounting (albeit as a complaint!) of what they are learning in English 110 is evidence of a successfully challenging articulation between high school and college.

High School Students: Getting Ready for College

The data collection of high school students during the December visit to college classrooms is a challenge to interpret. Student comments, as the summary below shows, were based on a superficial observation of learning and instruction in a college classroom. On the one hand, students' comments can be read as an indicator of the kinds of things that matter to them in a classroom. However, given the limits of their experience with learning and teaching in a college context, it is unfair to expect these high school students to be able to comment in anyway other than the most superficial.

Nevertheless, we offer a list of the themes of responses these students reported to us after visiting—and in some instances, participating in—two English classes.

1. What makes learning easy for you?
 - Understanding
 - Comprehending

- Relating to books
- Tests that help me understand
- Staying on the task
- Learning sentence structures
- Remembering
- Working hard

2. What has made learning hard for you?

- The 8 parts of speech
- Shakespeare's language
- Things not explained well
- Too much book work
- Reading fun literature

3. How does a person succeed in HS English classes?

- Do your work and listen in class
- Work hard on papers
- Take time to really think about what you are writing or reading

4. What was unfamiliar or different to you in college classes?

- Students asked questions that were the focus of discussion.
- Students really discussed the topics in small groups; they didn't just talk about what was going on.
- The teacher did all the talking; he talked from notes. My high school teacher does not do that.
- No one fell asleep.
- There are different kinds of interpretations in this class.
- The professor uses more profound words.

4. What was similar?

- It was dull.
- Still working with mechanics.

- They were reading the same book I read this year (Sir Gawain and the Green Knight)
- Comparing assignments with other students.
- Some questions needed direct answer; some questions were thinking answers.
- The teacher tries to relate to the students.
- Homework is assigned.
- Taking notes from the lecture.

Conclusion

We find little evidence among the students we surveyed and interviewed that there is a troubling struggle to learn the skills, competencies, and standards for college-level reading and writing. Students express frustrations with not being able to immediately and effortlessly discharge the tasks and assignments they are given. One might infer from this finding that high school teachers need to challenge and teach their students to “think” more rigorously. Certainly, we would not argue against providing students more opportunities to use writing and reading to think and solve problems. Indeed, one of the specific, and to us, reasonable recommendations from college students to high school teachers is to learn to write in genres other than creative forms, autobiographical narratives, and five paragraph essays.

To our colleagues in college composition, we offer a cautionary recommendation: do not assume that students’ struggles with college reading and writing assignments is evidence of being under prepared. To be clear, we certainly expect students to arrive in a college writing class with the requisite skills, knowledge, and competencies. However, at the same time, we remind college teachers to not take for granted the unfamiliar and often strange ways in which reading and writing are used in college settings. The culture of college literacy, the unique ways in which reading and writing, thinking and inquiring

are used are not “natural” habits of the intellect, but they are learned through patient and explicit teaching.

Learning about new ways with writing, reading, and thinking is, we have argued, more than learning new skills and techniques. New ways with literacy means learning about the kinds of questions, topics, processes of inquiry, audiences, and appropriate genres and conventions of communication. It means learning the typically unstated and assumed. These are matters that must be taught to students and not merely assigned.

APPENDICES
WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT
CESA 10 English Language Arts

Agenda
Curriculum Articulation Project
December 6, 2000
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

8:30-9:00	Donuts, Juice & Coffee	Clearwater Room
9:00-9:50	Introduction and Goals	Clearwater Room
10:00-Noon	Classroom Visits	
	10:00	
	College Composition	Dr. Chuck Hanson HHH 213
	Introduction to Texts	Dr. August Rubrecht HHH 230
	11:00	
	World Literature	Dr. Patrick Day HHH 308
	Introduction to Literature	Dr. Blake Westerlund HHH 307
	College Composition	Dr. Joel Pace HHH 226
12:00-2:00	Lunch and Discussion	Old Library 1132

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT CESA 10 English Language Arts

CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT CESA 10 MEETING OCTOBER 25, 2000 UWEC

I. Discussion of Survey Data

- a) When asked “How well did your 12th grade English class prepare you for English 110?” the students reported:
- VERY WELL 16%
 - FAIRLY WELL 44%
 - NOT VERY WELL 20%
 - NOT AT ALL 04%
- b) Students were asked to write down what they were “unprepared” for in English 110. Approximately half of the students wrote comments. Scott’s analysis of the comments points to the following themes:
- Students were unprepared for the purposes and forms of college level writing.
 - Students were unprepared for the workload, pace, and complexity of college writing.
 - Students were unprepared for college teachers’ expectations for knowledge and control of usage and mechanics.
 - Students were unprepared for analytical, critical thinking, reading, and writing.
 - Students were unprepared to do college level library research, and to use MLA documentation.
- c) Both sets of data from this survey confirm the patterns we noticed in the first survey we administered last spring.

II. Tentative Analysis

At first glance, the data is contradictory. That is, student responses to the multiple choice questions “How well did English 12 prepare you for English 110?” and “How much of English 110 has been simply a review?” indicate that approximately 70% of the students feel prepared. In contrast to this, though, students’ written comments consistently spelled out what they think high school teachers should have taught them in preparation for English 110.

We do not think that students’ written comments indicate a misalignment between high school and college. Specifically, we think that students’ responses to the question: “What could English 12 do to better prepare you for English 110” are *backreading*. By this we mean that students now perceive English 12 in terms of what they are learning in English 110. The unstated assumption and question on their part is: “If I were taught this (complexity, pace, MLA, etc.) in high school, I wouldn’t have to be learning it now.”

These students, we believe, confuse what they are learning in English 110 with what they think they should have been taught in English 12. In contrast to the students’ view that challenge and difficulty indicate failure in preparation, we think that because students’ ability to spell out what they are learning in English 110 (new criteria, work loads, complexity, purposes, genres, etc.) is evidence of a successfully challenging articulation between high school and college.

III. Conclusion

We find little evidence among these students that anyone is seriously struggling to learn the skills, competencies, and standards for college-level reading and writing. Given this, we aim to continue researching the differences between high school and college literacy in terms of “culture.” Specifically, our goal is to gain more detailed, fine-grain accounts from students about the differences and similarities of the culture of reading, writing, and thinking between high school and college.

IV. Proposal

We have two goals:

1. To further our understanding of student perceptions of the differences and similarities between reading, writing, and thinking in college and high school.
2. To pilot a model for college and high school articulation.

Toward these goals, we have agreed to carry out the following:

- ✓ Bob, Paul, Linda, and Stan will each identify two of their students to attend classes on Wednesday, December 6, at UWEC. Scott will send letters to these students, inviting them to help us with our attempts to better understand how high school and college teachers can help students with the transition.
- ✓ We will begin the morning with introductions and ice-breaker activities to establish a group identity.
- ✓ Students and teachers will attend two classes during the morning. Scott will schedule these classes and work with the college instructors to find ways to allow the high school students to participate in ways other than simply observe and listen.
- ✓ The whole group will gather again for lunch and discussion of their experiences.
- ✓ This large group meeting will be videotaped.
- ✓ Follow-up interviews with individual students may occur at a later date.
- ✓ The data from these interviews will be transcribed, analyzed, and used to prepare the final report for this project.

UW System and WDPI Curriculum Articulation Project

CESA #10 English Language Arts

Minutes

March 8, 2000

Attending:

Mary Ellen Alea
Bob Carr
Helen Dale
Fran Garb
Linda Graves
Mary Meiser
Stan Nesbit
Scott Oates
Barbara Price
Paul Savides

Scott asked that Fran open the meeting by reminding us of the purpose of this project.

Large framework: to move as much as we can toward a well articulated K-16 system, so that students do not encounter gaps or redundancies. The timing--in association with the creation of the WI Model Academic Standards--is great. This is the first time we have had a document that would unify and describe the curriculum K-12. One of the purposes is to be part of this ongoing process that would move us toward that goal.

Small framework:

- to look at what happens in an exit-level class and what happens in an entrance-level class
- to look at what students know when they come in--what they know and what they need to know
- to look at your curriculum, the Standards, your assessment

Fran hopes that both a process and a product will emerge from this. This process is very interesting, too, on the national level. At a nation-wide conference in Utah this summer, she discovered that there are no other states in which this is going on without some sort of legislative mandate or other source of pressure.

Fran also expressed her appreciation to the group for their efforts.

Survey Results

Results of the draft surveys were shared and discussed.

Observations included:

Survey comments often seemed at odds with the statistics. One possibility: the majority do not write comments, so it is the minority voice that is represented in the comments.

We are looking at two very different cultures. One focus of our work may be finding out how students make the transition from high school to college in cultural terms. What are university teachers doing to help students understand and participate in this new culture? We need to take into consideration not only the students' knowledge as they enter college, but the contextual issues as well.

Asked if such issues were appropriate for this committee to consider, Fran replied, yes, absolutely. As you read through these notes about concerns, you realize how overwhelming this is. What should be in the articulation . . . some of it is the responsibility of the K-12 faculty to prepare students for the next culture. It is also a responsibility of the UW faculty to say not just "you were warned" but "here are the resources available."

Linda administered the survey to her regular and advanced classes. Stan and Paul gave the survey only to students planning to go on to college.

Stan observed some fear on the part of his students of being blind-sided in college.

For the next administration of the surveys, it would be desirable to standardize our reporting of the responses to include both a summary of the comments and hash marks showing frequency.

Discussion of the relevance of effective oral communication to the UW Competencies led to a larger question of the alignment of the Competencies with the WI Model Academic Standards.

Question on hold: Is effective oral communication addressed in the UW Competencies?

Larger question: How do the UW Competencies align with the WMAS? How do we identify common threads that are not necessarily direct points of alignment?

Bob offered an observation about student perceptions of high school work, illustrated by the remark that students do not believe he is teaching grammar because he does not approach it in the same manner as the teacher who covers it in the junior courses. Students "therefore think they are not being taught writing." Asked if he thinks the Standards are helping drive the change from lecture to engagement, Bob responded "yes."

Scott shared the results of the UWEC surveys, which was administered to 486 students. He reported that his anecdotal experience with 110 of those students sometimes contradicts the survey responses.

Some observations:

The survey responses would probably be very different in the fall.

By spring, a number of the students who did not succeed have left the system.

The surprising number of UWEC students who are from Minnesota presents some questions for the next round of our survey.

This form included no accounting concerning the number of students who came from private vs. public schools.

APPENDICES
WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT
CESA 10 English Language Arts

Some students reported little or no writing in high school, or writing only in limited forms.

While the few comments contradicted the numbers, there was the suggestion that some students felt unprepared for the kind of critical or analytical reading required in college.

Some students are "blown away" by both the freedom and the responsibility of university work.

High school teachers could do a better job of asking students to respond to literature with their own original ideas.

High school senior year and college don't need to be the same.

The cultural understanding is that college is a place where you do critical inquiry. High school is high school.

Revision: Do college teachers do enough to teach revision strategies--conceptualizing and reconceptualizing?

The culture of high school is "do your own work." Students may not encounter writing as a collaborative process until college.

Some university students feel they have more time for writing during the day. Most high school kids do their writing at home, alone, at night. It's not that high school teachers are pounding students for working with someone else--it's that the life of high school doesn't give them time for it.

The Standards socialize the writing process. Writing socially does take a lot of class time, but there is much to be gained from it.

Is the culture of high school a factor in reducing collaborative effort? High school places students in competition, values proving oneself.

For many students, college is sweet relief after the agony of high school.

Maturity also plays a part. Here they can show off their ability to have large ideas.

Editing skills: The distinction between knowing they have made an error and being able to name the error is important.

Putting an emphasis on the writing process is not to say that mechanics are not important. That emphasis just comes later in the process.

For high school students, the value of mechanics is not obvious. When they get to college, that changes.

What about the necessity of giving grades? . . . Performance standards move us away from the M & M approach to rewarding work.

Bob reported his district is looking at a competency-based reporting system.

Fran: The competency-based admission process was intended to give you some relief from the pressure to give grades. There are still so many pressures to place kids into hierarchies.

There seemed to be the impression that college classes are just faster and more demanding, repeating everything from high school.

Is repetition necessarily a bad thing? . . . Isn't articulation what we want?

Students appear often to be building their perceptions of college off other people's perceptions.

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

CESA 10 English Language Arts

Alignment of UW Competencies with WI Model Academic Standards

Fran described the context for the creation of the UW Competencies. The work of the committee asked to complete this work was: If a student had a curriculum in English Language Arts that was totally described by the Model Academic Standards, would that meet the admission requirements as described by the Competencies or would there be a gap? There was no qualitative data. The Wisconsin Tech College system also generated knowledge, skills, and process. We did not want a yes/no answer, nor did we want a narrative. We wanted a text match, so that people like you could determine if this represented alignment. "Admission" does not mean students are ready to go into advanced classes.

We found that if the student had a curriculum that was described by the Standards, there was a close match until the last page--Media. UW had not thought about this area as germane to English Language Arts. Form #1 reflects this work.

The second set of materials we received, Form #2, represents the Competencies back-matched to the Model Academic Standards. There are some interesting areas left blank. The gaps here may be useful to both faculties.

Forms #3 and 4 represent a different project, in which Mary Meiser participated. This was a comparison of the content of the placement test with both the WMAS and the UW Admission Competencies. The placement test is an editing test.

Fran urged us to be critical readers of these documents and said she hopes we will think about placement as we think about articulation. If so, what would we need to see in a placement exam to make it a useful tool to help teachers understand what is expected of students at the university level and to help UW faculty make wise decisions about where students are placed? Material descriptive of the placement test blueprint and the narrative of each group's report appear in the WI alignment project booklet.

Scott suggested revisiting the survey questions to:

- pick up the language the Standards and Competencies are assuming
- align the questions between high school and college
- align how we will report the results

Discussion of the placement test will be deferred until the next meeting.

Question to Fran: Is our task to be looking at all the strands of the language arts Standards?

Fran: The emphasis is on exit-level and entry-level courses. If it is necessary for you to narrow your focus in order to do your work well, it is appropriate for you to do so.

Next steps:

Scott will take responsibility for getting the draft of the revised survey to us as an e-mail attachment so we can refine it at our next meeting.

Questions for later consideration: Do we want to survey students who are not planning to attend college? Do we want to administer the survey to all kids?

Fran urged us to bring samples of student writing and look at how we evaluate that writing.

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

CESA 10 English Language Arts

For the next meeting: Each person will bring representative samples of student writing at all performance levels from each exit or entry level class they teach, along with necessary contextualizing information and scoring/grading rubrics.

Fran offered to duplicate materials faxed or sent electronically to her or to cover the cost of duplicating.

Next meeting

9:00 - 3:00

Wednesday, April 26

Survey of High School Students
March, 2000
Grade 12 English

(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree)

1. I have done what I can to prepare myself for college English.
5, 19, 53, 21
2. College English will be significantly more demanding than high school English.
0, 16, 48, 33
3. I am concerned about being successful in my college English classes.
3, 21, 52, 21
4. I will need to be proficient in English to be successful in my chosen field of study.
2, 30, 45, 22
5. I will need to be proficient in English to be successful in a career.
2, 14, 59, 24
6. My high school English teachers have talked about what to expect in college.
3, 28, 52, 14
7. When I read, I rarely have trouble understanding the vocabulary.
6, 23, 50, 19
8. When I encounter an unfamiliar word, I can usually get at the meaning by analyzing parts of the word and/or looking at context.
1, 7, 57, 33
9. I am well prepared to study literature (reading and interpreting) in college.
4, 28, 54, 12
10. I believe I can read well enough to be successful in college.
1, 10, 52, 37
11. I am familiar with terminology used in a discussion of grammar and usage.
1, 18, 65, 15
12. I can proofread and edit my writing well, so my instructors mark very few errors on returned work.
2, 27, 54, 14
13. I believe I am well prepared for college writing.
5, 26, 57, 9
14. I know how to listen for key points and take good notes.

- 2, 20, 60, 15
15. I can deliver a high quality formal speech.
3, 36, 52, 7
16. When I speak in groups, I can express myself effectively to inform or persuade.
2, 25, 54, 15
17. I am well prepared in the use of technology, able to operate a computer for projects that require word processing, desktop publishing, or multimedia.
2, 13, 47, 36
18. I know how to conduct effective searches when I gather information for a research project.
0, 9, 57, 31
19. I am fluent with at least one method for documentation of sources in research.
2, 22, 58, 17
20. Overall, I feel that my high school English classes have prepared me for success in college.
3, 14, 66, 13

Open-Ended Questions

21. Where have you found out information about the expectations and requirements of a university composition class?

Most students received information from siblings, friends, and teachers, in that order. Other contributors were parents, college reps, friends on university staff, and brochures.

22. What would you identify as the strengths and weaknesses of your high school English curriculum?

In this category, students gave very individualized responses; however, a few recurring patterns did emerge. For example, many students noted the quality of literature, dedication and effectiveness of staff, and variety of writing assignments as strengths. Weaknesses included lack of access to technology, little formal discussion of grammar and mechanics, and a problem with the level of difficulty of courses (too easy or too difficult—about equal in number). Several students also noted that the classes were effective in teaching them, but were too boring.

23. What English classes have you taken in high school specifically to prepare you for university level classes?

All of these students have enrolled in British Lit. 12, some at the AP level. Many have taken “enriched” English at some point in their high school careers.

24. What will you pursue as a major field of study in college?

Most students believed English was at least somewhat important to them regardless of major.

25. What are your biggest concerns about college English?

Writing expectations: how tough will professors be in evaluation? How many papers will I have to write?

Reading: mostly volume, but also difficulty

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

CESA 10 English Language Arts

Survey One
English 110 Students
UWEC, March 2000
N=486

1. My high school class prepared me well for English 110
2. My high school English classes taught me how to document information in a researched paper.
3. My high school English classes taught me how to do research using a library.
4. My high school English classes taught me to write for a variety of purposes and audiences.
5. My high school English classes gave me experiences with challenging reading.
6. I usually got to choose the topics I wrote about in high school English
7. My high school English classes taught me strategies for revising papers.
8. I feel confident about my writing skills.
9. I feel confident about my ability to edit for correctness

Strongly Disagree

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

CESA 10 English Language Arts

7%

9%

7%

7%

10%

5%

8%

7%

8%

Disagree

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

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22%

21%

19%

29%

19%

26%

37%

27%

33%

Agree

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

CESA 10 English Language Arts

46%

45%

50%

43%

42%

46%

40%

46%

41%

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

CESA 10 English Language Arts

Strongly Agree

23%

24%

22%

19%

27%

21%

13%

15%

12%

Survey One
English 110 Students
Narrative Responses

Know Best at Entry

- ✓ There was approximately a four to one ratio of students indicating that they were knowledgeable about composition compared to those who indicated they were not knowledgeable.
- ✓ Of those who indicated being knowledgeable with composing, they expressed that they were practiced at writing five paragraph essays, creative writing, narratives, and autobiographical narratives.
- ✓ Students indicated with high frequency that they were familiar with research and documenting skills.
- ✓ Students indicated to a lesser degree familiarity with editing, reading, and grammar/mechanics.

Know Least at Entry

- ✓ Here, the most frequently mentioned item was lack of preparation in grammar and mechanics.
- ✓ The second most frequently item listed was research skills.
- ✓ Some students said that they were unprepared for reading critically.
- ✓ Even less frequently mentioned were familiarity with composing, revising, editing, critical reading, and timed writing.

Material Repeated in 110

- ✓ Here, the two most frequently cited redundancies were “mechanics” and “everything.” Of those who said “everything,” they often qualified this by saying that college was simply more difficult and demanding.
- ✓ The second most frequently cited redundancy was “mechanics.”

How Students Differ in 110

- ✓ Students most frequently indicated that they were more motivated in college writing than they were in high school English.
- ✓ They also noted that college gave them more time to work on their writing.
- ✓ Some students indicated that they were worse students in writing now than they were in high school.

Advise to High School Programs

- ✓ Students overwhelmingly said that they wanted more writing and different types of writing. Related to this, some students specifically complained about the redundancy of autobiographical writing and the absence of argumentative writing.
- ✓ Students consistently asked to be taught more about research processes, documentation of sources, editing, and revising.

Where did Students Get Information about College Writing?

- ✓ Students indicated that they got information about college writing from their friends first and teachers second. Less significant sources were parents and sibling. Only one student identified a university handbook as a source of information.

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

CESA 10 English Language Arts

Survey Two
April 2000
English 110 Students
(N=519)

This survey was administered in late April and early May in English 110 classes at UWEC. These students, thus, had been enrolled in college for almost two full semesters. 519 students completed this survey.

1. Multiple Choice Responses to Describe the Sample of Participants:

- 92% of the students identified themselves as freshmen.
- 89% identified themselves as only one year out of high school

- 13% of the students attended a high school with less than 300 students.
- 26% attended a school of 300-800 students.
- 28% of the students attended a school of 800-1500 students.
- 28% attended a school of 1500-2500 students.
- 5% attended a school of more than 2500 students.

- 76% of the students attended Wisconsin high schools
- 22% of the students attended Minnesota high schools.

2. Multiple choice responses to the following questions:

How well did your 12th grade English class prepare you for English 110?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----|
| • VERY WELL | 16% |
| • FAIRLY WELL | 44% |
| • NOT VERY WELL | 20% |
| • NOT AT ALL | 04% |

Approximately what percentage of the material covered in English 110 has been a review of 12th grade English?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| • Less than one-quarter | 26% |
| • One-quarter to one-half | 44% |
| • One-half to three-quarters | 19% |
| • Three-quarter to complete | 19% |

Summary of Narrative Responses to Two Questions

1. List the aspects of English 110 for which 12th grade English did not prepare you.
2. What do you believe would be helpful in improving the transition between 12th grade English and English 110?
 - Students were unprepared for the purposes and forms of college level writing.
 - Students were unprepared for the workload, pace, and complexity of college writing.

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

CESA 10 English Language Arts

- Students were unprepared for college teachers' expectations for knowledge and control of usage and mechanics.
- Students were unprepared for analytical, critical thinking, reading, and writing.
- Students were unprepared to do college level library research, and to use MLA documentation.
- Students recommended more writing and different types of writing in high school.
- Some students specifically noted the redundancy of autobiographical writing and the absence of argumentative writing in high school.

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT CESA 10 English Language Arts

Survey Two English 110 Students Narrative Responses April 2000

Students reported they were unprepared for the purposes and forms of college level writing.

- Too much literature-based writing was assigned in high school.
- We did not write for different audiences.
- High school should stress more than the five-paragraph essay.
- College expected us to write in different genres.
- College emphasized thesis, structures, and coherence more than high school did.
- In high school, we mainly studied for the AP test.
- Less personal essays and more academic essays.

Students reported they were unprepared for the workload, pace, and complexity of college writing instruction.

- We have to write more in a shorter length of time with better quality.
- We need to write more papers in high school.
- I don't think I wrote half as much in 4 years of high school as I did this semester.
- We spent more time [in high school] reading than anything else. We didn't learn how to comment on it.
- I was not prepared to write five papers plus have other assignments all in one semester.
- I was not prepared to do the paper work on my own, outside of class.
- In high school we need more long papers and more in-depth stuff.

Students reported they were unprepared for college teachers' expectations for knowledge and control of usage and mechanics (grammar).

- I was not taught much grammatically in high school.
- In high school I was taught to write a formal essay not using "I," but in college it was good to use "I" and personal experiences.
- We did not study sentence structures enough [in high school].

Students reported they were unprepared for analytical, critical thinking, reading, and writing.

- English in high school does not prepare people for analytical thought. We were spoon fed the underlying meanings. Here you are expected to think for yourself.

Students reported they were unprepared for the general expectations of college writing teachers.

- 12th grade writing is completely different than college [writing]. In high school I thought I was a good writer, but in no way shape or form did my so-called good writing prepare me for this class.
- Papers that I got A's on in high school are F's now.
- In high school we need stricter guidelines, higher expectations; make the class more of a college setting.

Students reported they were unprepared to do library research in a college and to use MLA to document their sources.

- I think that high schools should review MLA and tactics on how to write papers.
- I feel that we should have covered extensive research in high school.
- The only thing I was unprepared in was citing borrowed material.

Students suggest that college teachers can help make a smoother transition.

APPENDICES

WISCONSIN CURRICULUM ARTICULATION PROJECT

CESA 10 English Language Arts

- I wasn't prepared to write the kind of essays that I was expected to write in English 110. To make it easier on students, take things slow, explain clearly what you want from the students, and work with them to achieve the knowledge that English 110 offers.
- Walk students through the first few assignments. This way they can establish a good basis for writing papers.

Students suggest that high school teacher can help make a smoother transition.

- High school teachers should find out about MLA.
- Make them [college and high school] more similar. Have college professors compile what they deem an important syllabus and send it out to high schools.
- Is there any communication between the high school English teacher and the university English staff?
- Inform high school teachers on methods that are taught in English 110 classes. Help to make a more universal system of citing, researching, and paper writing.

Only a handful of students reported their experience in terms of LEARNING.

- I wouldn't change anything; I learned a lot of new things and I learned about responsibility.