**College of Arts and Sciences**

**Writing Specialist Report – Fall Semester 2010**

**Sarah Bartlett Wilson**

*Report Snapshot*

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| **Course Information:** |
|  | Course and Section | Enrollment (August) | Enrollment (December) | December Passing Rates |
| *Overall* | *Regular Attendees* |
|  | ENGL 105S.2 | 16 | 16 | 62.5% | 71.4% |
|  | ENGL 105S.3 | 18 | 15 | 93.3% | 93.3% |
|  | ENGL 105S.7 | 17 | 15 | 66.7% | 90.9% |
|  | *Combined*  | *51* | *46* | *73.9%* | *85.0%* |

**Texts:**

* Henry, D. J. *Writing for Life: Paragraphs and Essays*. 2nd ed. Boston: Longman, 2010. Print.
* MyWritingLab (Pearson online access code bundled with textbook in bookstore)

**Syllabus Highlights**:

* Course Goals
* To develop skills in academic writing.
* To give students a set of concepts to help structure their thinking and work toward writing clear, persuasive, stylish prose. This will be achieved by engaging various rhetorical strategies in response to a variety of interactions between writer, reader, text, topic, and moment.
* Assignment Weights:
* 20% – 1-Paragraph Assignments (5 total)
* 25% – 2-Paragraph Assignments (4 total)
* 20% – Essay
* 15% – Homework & MyWritingLab Work
* 10% – In-Class Writing (announced) & Quizzes (announced and unannounced)
* 10% – Participation (including class discussions, Moodle, and Workshops)
* Attendance Policy: 3 “free” absences, 2 point deduction off final grade for each absence thereafter, and failure of the course for the 8th absence. Three late arrivals equal an absence.

**Key Findings:**

* Students who attended regularly had an **85% chance of passing the class**
* The data suggest that **the new syllabus is helping students** write better sentences, paragraphs, and essays
* Students showed **an average 15-point increase in MyWritingLab scores** at the end of the semester
* In contrast to the beginning of the semester, **ENGL 105S students on average outscored ENGL 105 students** on the Diagnostic Post-Test in every category
* **Accuplacer scores** seem to have no correlation to final grades—and uneven correlation to placement

**Recommendations:**

* Registration
* Offering **more ENGL 105S sections and fewer ENGL 105 sections**
* Implementation of a **WA (or R) grade**
* Tracking the impact of the new pre-foundational **attendance policy** on grades in Spring 2011
* Syllabus
* **More standardization**—of Goals & Objectives, assignment structures, and grading
* **Changing assignment weights** to place even greater emphasis (70-75%) on formal assignments
* Data Collection/Analysis
* **Tracking of rubric data** in a more systematic fashion
* Following through on plans to **normatively score the writing samples** this summer
* **Hiring a 3rd Writing Specialist**—this Specialist would help shoulder the pre-foundational needs in CAS and/or SPS, which are currently being addressed in both schools to some extent by adjuncts.