

# POWERING UP THE WRITING PROCESS

ENGL101-011:

Introduction to College Writing  
with Support

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The problem:  
students don't  
use the writing  
process  
effectively

- Most ENGL101-011 students are in their first semester of college
- Skill levels and needs vary widely
- Most students have not used a writing process in the past (I asked)
- Students think their writing is weak because they are **bad writers**, when in fact they have a **bad writing process**
- Bad process = bad essay grades
- Bad essay grades = bad consequences

# The strategy: Present writing as a problem the writing process helps solve.

## What we did: small-group work

- Group problem-solving games to introduce composition concepts for each formal essay
- Documentation and discussion of the group's process

# The strategy: Present writing as a problem the writing process helps solve.

## What we did: individual work

- **Required** documentation of a writing process for essays to be accepted
- Peer comparisons of **process** at various stages of essay composition
- **Self-assessment** of process for each essay
- **Comparison** of writing process at the start vs. the end of the semester

# Texts that influenced my strategy

- Handstedt, “Structuring Wicked Courses” from *Creating Wicked Students*, on sequencing courses so that the most important elements are repeated
- Bowen, *Teaching Change*, on Dweck’s ideas about mindset interventions
- Barkley and Major, *Student Engagement Techniques*, on Believing and Doubting as a critical reading strategy

# Results: process is power

FALL 2022, ENGL101-011

COLLEGE READING AND WRITING WITH SUPPORT

- Section 1:
  - 10 of 18 with a C or above
  - 55% pass rate
- Section 2:
  - 15 of 22 with a C or above
  - 68% pass rate

FALL 2023, ENGL101-011

COLLEGE READING AND WRITING WITH SUPPORT

- Section 1:
  - 18 of 20 continued attending
  - 15 of 18 with a C or above
  - 83% pass rate (75% of enrolled)
- Section 2:
  - 13 of 18 continued attending (2 withdrew and 3 elected not to withdraw despite being advised to drop before the 20% date)
  - 11 of 13 with a C or above
  - 84.6% pass rate (69% of those on the roster)

# In the words of one student repeating the course...

*I was not adept at a lot of things for the creation of my essays. I struggled with outlining, revising, and when taking feedback from others. The first essay is where I had a tough time understanding what to do...I was not thrilled when it came to reading the feedback from either teacher or peer review partner, I felt inept and was worried that I could not improve. However, now I grasp the value of planning, revising my essays for mistakes, and learning from others advice on how to improve my essays. I learned a lot from [peer review feedback]. When I found it hard to express what I was trying to say in my essay, they wrote sweet things in their peer review... They made me feel I was understood. After reading their comments I was more willing to listen to their advice.*

THANK YOU, JOAN  
AND COLLEAGUES!