School Name	Norco College
Course Name	Preparatory Composition; English Composition
Course Format	On-ground, Hybrid, Online

Key Results 74.1 percent of students entering the accelerated Preparatory Composition pathway with Pearson Writer succeeded versus 24.6 percent of students entering the 3-course Developmental Writing sequence. Of students subsequently enrolling in English Composition, 82.7 percent of the Prep Comp students with Pearson Writer succeeded versus just 15 percent of the 3-course Developmental Writing students.

Course materials
Pearson Writer; Bean, Chappell & Gillam, *Reading Rhetorically*; full-length texts

Instructor
Melissa Bader, Associate Professor, English

Setting

Norco College is one of three colleges in the Riverside Community College District. Norco College serves 10,000 students annually, offering day, evening, weekend, and online access to academic and career technical programs in industry and the arts. A HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution), Norco College became the 112th and newest California community college when it received accreditation in 2010.

Challenges and goals

A close evaluation of five years (2002-2007) of results revealed that of 614 students who started in the lowest level of three developmental writing courses, only 92 students (15 percent) persisted to successfully complete all three levels of developmental writing and freshman composition. To alleviate the "leaky pipeline," Norco's English Department created Preparatory Composition (English 80), an accelerated pathway to freshman composition.

Preparatory Composition combines three levels of developmental writing into one, 6-unit class. There are no pre-requisites, and students may enter the course from any placement prior to Freshman Composition. Students are expected to read full texts, not excerpts, and to write a minimum of 10,000 words. Grades are determined by a point system with weighted categories: Essays and short writing assignments (80%); Quizzes/Tests (10%); and Discussion/participation/labs (10%). The course is focused on helping students to acquire the mindset and skills of academic readers, writers, and thinkers.

For her sections of both Preparatory Composition and Freshman Composition, Professor Melissa Bader adopted Pearson Writer. Pearson Writer contains an always-available digital handbook as well as a set of tools and resources to help students plan, draft, revise, review, edit, and track their writing assignments.

Implementation

Professor Bader explains, "At the start of the course, we work together in class, using the Notes feature to build a supporting paragraph and then, in reverse, we dissect a paragraph to show its constituent parts. We'll begin with a quote from one of our required texts. We'll paraphrase the quote and then develop a commentary. The commentary step is where we work on metacognitive skills. Students learn to ask: Who cares? Why is this important? And in just a few minutes of class work, we have developed a solid paragraph. Then we'll do the same process in reverse. We'll begin with a paragraph and together, identify the quote, the paraphrase, the commentary. Then students perform the same exercise in groups. This core exercise becomes the foundation for the creation of outlines (using the Outline tool in Pearson Writer) and for longer essays."

She continues, "Once students have generated drafts or partial drafts with the Notes feature, they submit their work to Writing Review within Pearson Writer. Writing Review is superb for developing students' critical thinking skills because it doesn't answer questions for students. Writing Review helps students perform their own error analysis: What did I miss here? Students submit multiple drafts to Writing Review, each time strengthening both their metacognitive skills and their grasp of grammar and mechanics. My students love the Outline tool in Pearson Writer. Remarkably, most students have never created an outline before—and they don't know where to begin. Pearson Writer makes it easy for them to see how to generate an outline from their Notes and how the outline structure reflects a writer's strategy."

"I use the Notes feature of Pearson Writer in a building block approach to reveal the structure and logic of academic writing to students. What was once completely mysterious to students becomes transparent and more important, well within their grasp."

—*Professor Melissa Bader*

Using Pearson Writer's Notes:

Each Note will have the same elements.

1. Choose a quote that you think is essential to your understanding of an idea or claim from the reading.

2. In the Title portion, put down the context or purpose for the quote. This could also be a minor claim statement.

3. Copy the quote from the book into the box for the quote.

4. Paraphrase what the quote says in your own words. Look beyond the obvious and think about the *purpose/intent* of the quote.

5. Comment on the quote. **This is your chance for commentary.** What do you think about the quote? What was the purpose? How does this part of the text reveal something about the author or the claim or the book? Talk about why this is an important part and why your reader should be interested in the quote. **This is the most important part of the assignment**. You want to make sure that "what" you are saying about the quote is linking to the ideas you will argue in your paper. Reread the first week's paper on the Rhetorical Triangle for a reminder of these parts of the argument.

6. Link the quote to your reading resource. You will only need to add the resource one time; thereafter, it should be in a pull–down menu.

7. *Save your Notes.*

Edit Note

Note Details (Help)

Title: There are misconceptions about extroverts and introverts.

Source: Cain, Susan. Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Ta

Evidence from text (direct quote): Extroverts are sometimes credited with being "pro-social"--meaning caring about others--and introverts dispargred as people who don't like people.

Paraphrasing: Extroverts are thought to be gregarious and better at making connections. Introverts are thought to be more anti-social and not liking others.

Comment: This is significant because it is a misconception about extroverts and introverts. There is a bad image of introverts. Wanting quiet isn't about not wanting to be interested in other people. This is an important part of changing people's ideas about introversion. If people always think others are shy, then they don't understand about the real issue. It isn't that introverts are not compassionate. Cain

Identifier: 102

Ex: page numbers, specific URLs, or paragraphs

+ Organize

Group: People Notes

Tags:

(Separate by commas)

Color:

Save note

8. When you turn in your Notes, check spelling and punctuation. You should be able to use this same format for your papers and if you are thinking ahead, you will have Notes that help build your papers.

9. Each assignment will have four or five Notes.

Results and data

Results highlights

- Prior to the introduction of the accelerated 3-in-one Preparatory Composition course, only 15 percent (92 of 614) of students who began in the lowest-level Developmental Writing course successfully completed English Composition in 5 years.

- From fall 2012 through fall 2014, 632 students enrolled in the accelerated Preparatory Composition course. The success rate was 61.1 percent (386/632); of the 632 total students enrolled in Prep Comp, 158 students were enrolled in the Prep Comp sections using Pearson Writer-- success rate was 74.1 percent (117/158.)

- The success rate of students enrolling in English Composition following successful completion of Preparatory Composition overall 2012-2014 was 81.1 percent (172/212); students who successfully completed Prep Comp with Pearson Writer and enrolled in English Composition had a success rate in English Composition of 82.7 percent (62/75.)

- Prep Comp students succeeded in English Composition at comparable rates whether their initial placement was the lowest-level Developmental Writing course (sentence) (81.2 percent succeeded), Paragraph (84.4 percent succeeded), or Essay (88.9 percent succeeded.)
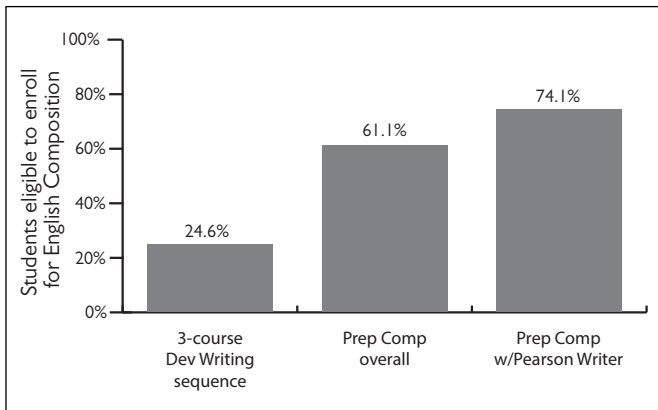
Figure 1. Comparative success rates for the 3-course Developmental Writing sequence 2002-2007 ($n = 614$), the accelerated Preparatory Composition course overall 2012-2014 ($n = 632$), and the Bader sections of Preparatory Composition 2012-2014 with Pearson Writer ($n = 158$.)
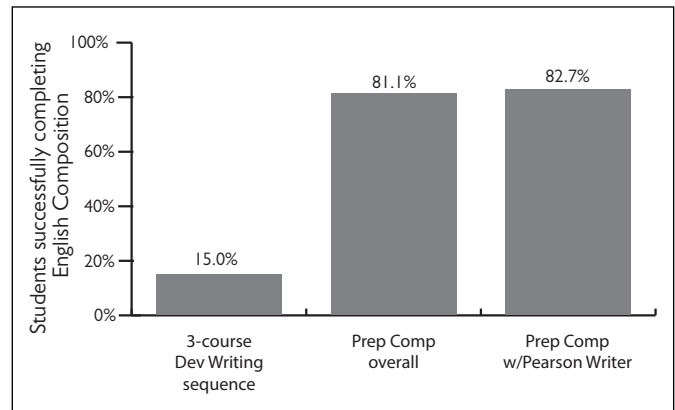

Figure 2. Comparative English Composition success rates for students who progressed to English Composition via the 3-course Developmental Writing sequence 2002-2007 ($n = 614$), for students who progressed to English Composition via the accelerated Preparatory Composition pathway overall 2012-2014 ($n = 212$), and for students who successfully completed Prep Comp with Pearson Writer and enrolled in English Composition 2012-2014 ($n = 75$.)

The student experience

Four students who used Pearson Writer in both Prep Comp (on-ground) and English Comp (hybrid or online) agreed to be interviewed about their experiences. These are highlights of their comments:

J., Norco College student
Career aspiration: Civil engineer

"I'm a math guy. English is not my favorite subject. But I got an A in Prep Comp, and I am currently doing very well in English Comp. I found Pearson Writer very helpful, especially for research papers. Find a Source makes it super easy to locate sources, and Citations keeps all of my source citations organized. Professor Bader showed us how to use the Notes

feature to build our essays, paragraph by paragraph. I just select a quote from my reading, paraphrase the quote, and then write a commentary. The commentary is the most important part—it's where I make the ideas my own. I love Writing Review—it's so helpful to get immediate feedback on my drafts. I use all the resources in Pearson Writer, including Purdue OWL and all the built-in grammar help."

"I have friends who are struggling with research papers; they don't know how to use citations and feel lost. I tell them, "Get Pearson Writer! Don't use Google. Pearson Writer is way easier.""

"I'm excited to use Pearson Writer in my history classes (lots of papers to write!) and even in my math classes where we do occasional writing assignments."

"I loved using Pearson Writer and will continue to use what I learned. In fact, I was so inspired by Professor Bader and gained so much confidence in my writing that I am transferring to a 4-year university to pursue English Education!"

—Student, Norco College

"Using the Notes feature in Pearson Writer is the most effective means I've ever found to teach academic writing and the underlying critical thinking skills."

—Melissa Bader

L., Norco College student
Career aspiration: English teacher

"I didn't learn how to do academic writing in high school. I had no idea how to begin or what the structure of my essays ought to be. Professor Bader made the structure of academic writing clear for the first time! She showed us how to construct Notes in Pearson Writer and to turn our Notes into essays."

"I like all the parts of Pearson Writer and found it simple and easy to navigate. Pearson Writer made the process of writing clear. I would definitely recommend Pearson Writer to a friend."

"Thanks to Professor Bader and my experience with Pearson Writer, I now want to be an English teacher."

S., Norco College student
Career aspiration: Veterinary technician

"I had no confidence in my writing. Professor Bader showed us how to build essays, step by step, using the Notes feature of Pearson Writer. I loved Writing Review—it was great to get anonymous feedback on my earliest drafts. I used the feedback to revise, and when I showed my essays to Professor Bader, I found that I did better than I thought. Prep Comp helped me a lot. Pearson Writer gave me the tools, and Professor Bader helped me to be more confident in my writing."

T., Norco College student
Career aspiration: English teacher

"Academic writing was unfamiliar and mysterious to me. Pearson Writer helped me to find reputable sources. The Notes feature helped me to build paragraphs and an outline that I built into essays. I sent my first 1 or 2 drafts to Writing Review and used the feedback to find my errors and revise. I initially tried to find sources in the library, but I didn't have much success. On the other hand, Find a Source in Pearson Writer was easy and very helpful."

"In Prep Comp and English Comp, I learned a lot that will carry over to my other courses. I learned how to structure my essays and how to remove fluff so that the important ideas stand out. I loved using Pearson Writer and will continue to use what I learned. In fact, I was so inspired by Professor Bader and gained so much confidence in my writing that I am transferring to a 4-year university to pursue English Education!"

Best practices

The rigor and pace of the accelerated Preparatory Composition requires a significant degree of motivation and discipline. Following the pilot in 2012-13, faculty and advisers redoubled their efforts to counsel students about course options and requirements in an effort to attract motivated students to enroll in Prep Composition. The percentage of students succeeding in Preparatory Composition rose from 58 percent in 2012-13 to 62.8 percent in 2013-14.

Conclusion

Professor Bader states, "Results indicate the accelerated Prep Comp course is a viable pathway for motivated students regardless of their initial placement. We are pleased to see students accelerating their academic progress into credit-bearing courses—and even more pleased to note significantly increased numbers of students succeeding in those credit-level courses."

She continues, "In my own courses, Pearson Writer has transformed my teaching. Results indicate that using Pearson Writer's Notes feature is effective for students in the accelerated Prep Comp course as well as in English Composition and English Composition Honors and for both on-ground and online classes. Students are turning in very strong essays and exhibiting a confidence in their skills that is most gratifying to witness. Most significant to me are the strong success rates across the board, from the students whose initial placement was at the lowest level of Developmental Writing all the way to Honors-level English Composition students."

ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON