



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA First-Year Composition

Jan. 2014  Newsletter

Welcome to 2014

First-year composers and their instructors had a productive fall, and we are on tap to have an equally active and exciting spring semester. For instructors new to our program, congratulations on completing your first semester! To returners, thanks for all you do.

Coming up, we have the Big Data Colloquium, continued celebration of student success, and additional updates. In this issue, we also announce the newly hired 2014-2015 FYC staff and present findings from the fall instructor survey.

The trends from our project analytics are very promising, and while we will continue to monitor curricular considerations in an effort to keep these up, we are shifting our focus this spring to another major area of writing instruction: peer review. That said, please do let us know if you have specific resources or practices that can improve peer review for our students and instructors. We look forward to developing this major area.

As always, please keep your feedback and great ideas coming!

Message from the Mentoring Coordinator

Welcome to the spring semester! I hope everyone had a restful, or productive, or fun winter break – I hope it was whatever you needed it to be. As we start the new semester I want to say thank you again to my fantastic team of mentors who worked so hard during the fall: Brittany Cagle, Brianna Jerman, Quincey Upshaw, and Alex Watkins. And I want to say congratulations to our new instructors for rocking their first semester here at USF: you should all be proud of what you accomplished last semester. The FYC staff has worked hard gearing up for the spring term (a big thank you in particular to Julie Gerdes for continuing to be our resident Canvas expert). I'm excited for the new projects we'll be working on in the coming weeks and I'm looking forward to sharing them with all the FYC instructors. Here's to a great semester.



-Ellie Browning

2014-15 FYC Staff Announced

Congratulations to the newest members of the FYC Staff. Applications were exceptionally competitive this year, and we appreciate the interest that so many members of our community expressed in curriculum development and mentorship. We hope that all members of the FYC community will continue to contribute to the program's bed of resources.

That said, the new staff members are:

Mentoring coordinator:
Quincey Upshaw



Summer
facilitators:
Prittany Cagle
Carlin Hueber
Heather Fox
Alex Watkins

Mentors:
Tiffany Poyles
Neil Fisher
Meg Mandell
Stephanie Phillips
Michael Stowe



Online Mentor:
Nancy Lewis

Common Reading Experience

We are looking forward to the continued integration of the Common Reading Experience (CRE) book, *the Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, in the FYC curriculum. As previously, we have some resources to facilitate those classroom conversations. If any transfer or other students have trouble accessing the book, please let us know.

2014-2015 CRE Book Selection

A university wide committee is currently working towards selecting the book for next year. We had over 60% response to our survey, so thanks to all who contributed an opinion. Based on your feedback as well as the committee's main considerations, we are down to two choices for next year: *Full Body Burden: Growing Up in the Nuclear Shadow of Rocky Flats* by Kristen Iverson (2013) and *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates* by Wes Moore (2011). If you feel strongly about either of these titles, please let Ellie or Julie know your opinion, so that your vote can be heard in the final decision that will affect instructors next fall.

BIG DATA

+ WRITING PROGRAMS

Jan. 24

The Big Data and Writing Studies Colloquium will be held on Friday, January 24 from 8-4 at the Marshall Student Center. The colloquium participants will explore the relationships between Big Data, Learning Analytics, and:

- Communal and individual agency
- Evidence-based curriculum development
- Writing assessment tools and methods
- Writing ecologies
- Replicable, aggregable, data-driven research

9:00 -4:00

MSC

toolsforwriters.com

Faculty from throughout the United States as well as Kebbi State, Nigeria; Malmö University, Sweden; Cape Town, South Africa; and Tartu, Estonia will be visiting and participating with many of our own graduate students, including Zachary Dixon, Lauren Cagle, Karen Langbehn, and Sarah Beth Hopton. Professor Julie Staggers will serve as a moderator, and Johanna Hillen, Alex Wayson, Brianna Jerman, Julie Gerdes, and Katherine McGee will serve as volunteers for registration, logistics, and exhibits. Thanks especially to the volunteers who will help make this event a success.

Registration is presently full, but visit <https://www.toolsforwriters.com> to add yourself to the waitlist if you are interested in attending.

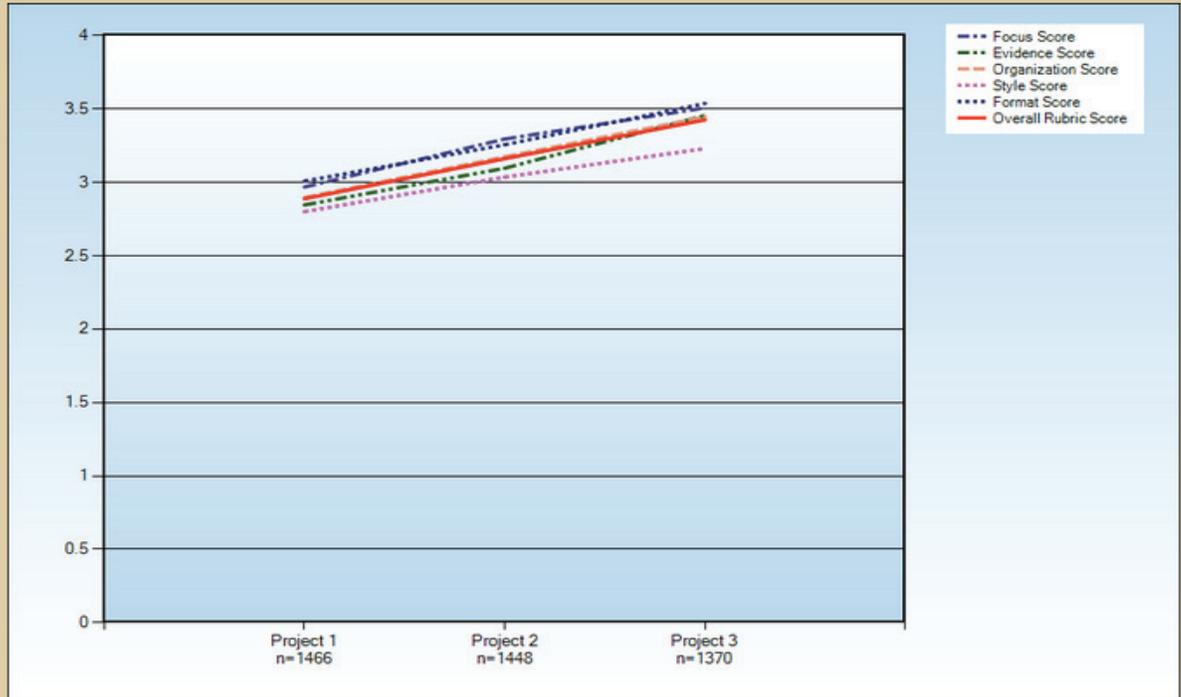
Save the Date Orientation 2014

Orientation for returning instructors will be held **August 18-20**, 2014 (new instructors will be orientated Aug. 11-13). If you plan to teach any FYC courses next year, please reserve these dates as you make summer plans. Remember that becoming involved in the leadership side of this event is also a great way to gain professional experience; if you have ideas for orientation sessions or would like to lead one, please contact Quincey Upshaw during the summer.

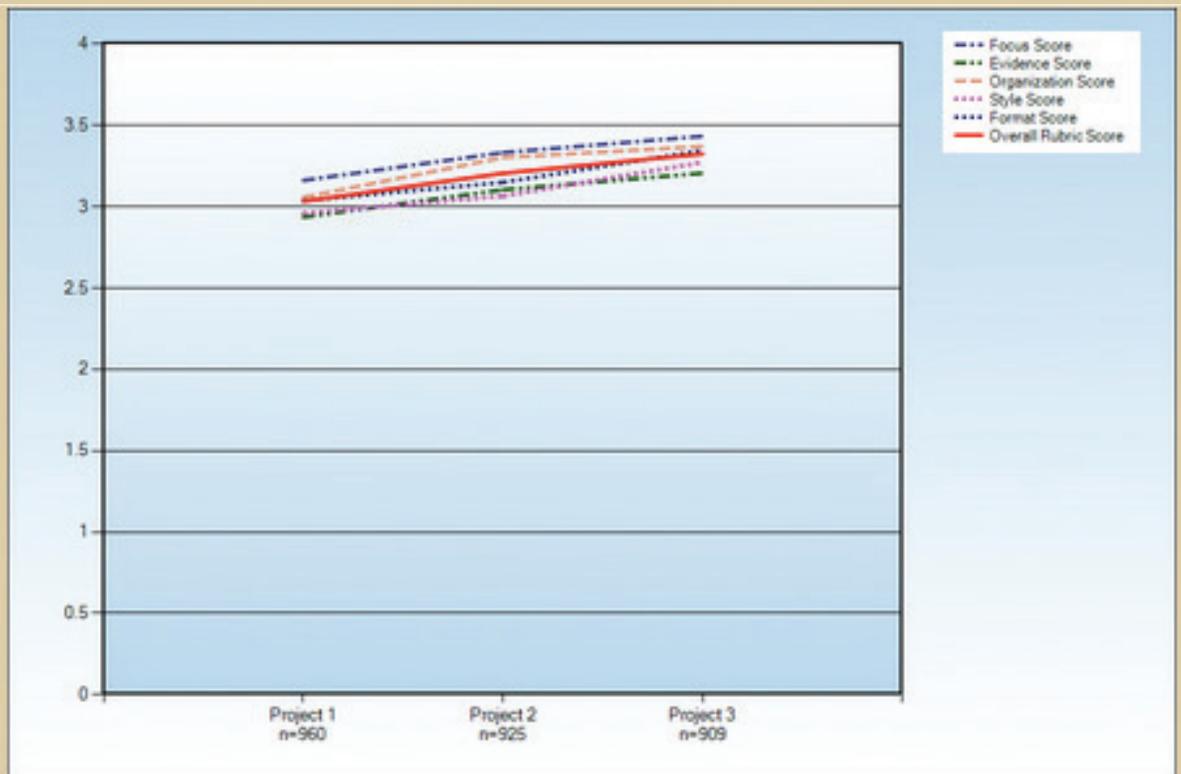
Fall 2013 Results

Since the inception of My Reviewers in our program, we have been moving towards our data reflecting positive trends in assessment. Previously, ENC1101 semester-end assessments had reached this goal, but for the first time in the history of My Reviewers, our semester results indicate that students are improving in all rubric areas across all projects. This is a significant indication of our instructors' success in and outside of the classroom. Good work!

ENC1101



ENC1102



Instructor Survey Results

From 67 instructors, we received 15 responses to the fall feedback survey (22.39% return rate). Overall, feedback was positive, and we worked to accommodate suggestions into curriculum changes over the winter break and will continue to consider concerns throughout the semester. Below, find a summary of comments and subsequent ideas about curricular adjustments.

ENC1101

Overall, ENC1101 instructors were very positive about the schedule of projects that was introduced in spring 2013, and they found that students enjoyed the remediation project the most. The two major criticisms that surfaced was one critique of the historiography project that argues that students unnecessarily struggle to understand the concept and purpose of that genre and two observations that students who initially made a poor decision in selecting a topic for the first project were “stuck” with it for the rest of the semester. Therefore, it follows to format the detailed schedule for 1101 such that there is more time for topic selection early in the semester and otherwise keep the project progression the same as it is now. Due to our responsibilities as a general education requirement, we need to keep a major historiographic project, but we might consider ways to better explain the project to students.

ENC1102

Again, the project progression for ENC1102 was overwhelmingly positive. However, instructors asked for more time and activities devoted to topic selection at the beginning of the semester and suggested that time at the end of the semester could be sacrificed for this accommodation.

“The progression of refreshed 1102 projects worked well this semester. The concept of keeping the same topic throughout the semester seemed to help with overall continuity. Most students are quite vested in the topic by the time they reach Project 3. Due to this, students should receive specific guidance regarding how to select a topic that will work well for them for the whole semester. With Project 1, it is important that students develop an understanding of the concept of stakeholder. A number of my students struggled with the idea of focusing on rhetorically analyzing the stakeholder’s images, rather than creating an argument based on the topic. This may be due, in part, to students not reading the introductory document as thoroughly as might be desired. However, instructors may wish to emphasize that students need to keep the paper’s focus on the analysis, not on the topic itself.”

eTexts

Most instructors were consistently pleased with the books, but they would like to see more articles for both 1101 and 1102. In 1101, instructors wanted to see more content that relates directly to our curriculum and more interactive content for articles that don’t already have embedded videos. In 1102, teachers were largely positive about tone, and suggested that more content on remediation and research would benefit the program.

CELEBRATE Student Success

Message from the Coordinator

I hope everyone had a great break and that your first week of spring classes is going well. I am looking forward to another semester of great Bullitzer submissions. During the fall semester we had nearly 60 Bullitzer submissions from 1101 and 1102 classes. I would love to see this number grow and to see even more instructors nominating students for this award. We also had a large number of instructors volunteer as readers to review student essays. If you are interested in volunteering as a Bullitzer reader, please contact me at snphillips@mail.usf.edu. You are also welcome to email me with questions or suggestions for moving the Bullitzer forward.

Good luck to everyone this semester and I hope to work with you to continue celebrating student success.

Stephanie Phillips

Bullitzer Prize



Congratulations to Project 3 Bullitzer winners Michael Flory (pictured top) and Sunahtah Jones (pictured at bottom), from ENC 1101 and 1102, respectively. Michael was in Rob Alexander's class, and Sunahtah was in Brogan Sullivan's class.

Full text of the essays and writer bios are available on the FYC website.

Project 1 Bullitzer submissions will be due around Week 6. Please keep an eye out for potential contestants as you work with students on their early and intermediate drafts.

Resources

Note that the Writing Center has hired more tutors and will have more availability this spring than in the fall; please encourage students to use this resource.

For instructors bringing classes to a library sessions, know that there will be more availability of librarians in February than January this semester. Please see Julie about setting up information literacy resources in your Canvas as an alternative to face-to-face meetings.