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Approach to Developing Basic and Scientific Writing Competency in DNP Students at Samuel Merritt University

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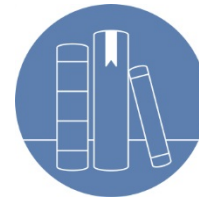
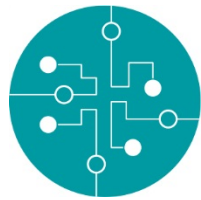
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*APPROACH TO DEVELOPING
BASIC AND SCIENTIFIC
WRITING COMPETENCY
IN DNP STUDENTS*



**SAMUEL
MERRITT**
UNIVERSITY

Michelle DeCoux Hampton, RN, PhD, MS
Professor and DNP Program Director
19 January 2018



INTRODUCTION – Problem Description



Poor writing skills

- College students²⁶
- ADN¹⁰
- BSN^{16,20,24}
- Graduate nursing:
Master's, PhD, DNP
1-4,6,7,12,14,16,17,21,22,25
- DNP programs
 - From <5% to majority of students³

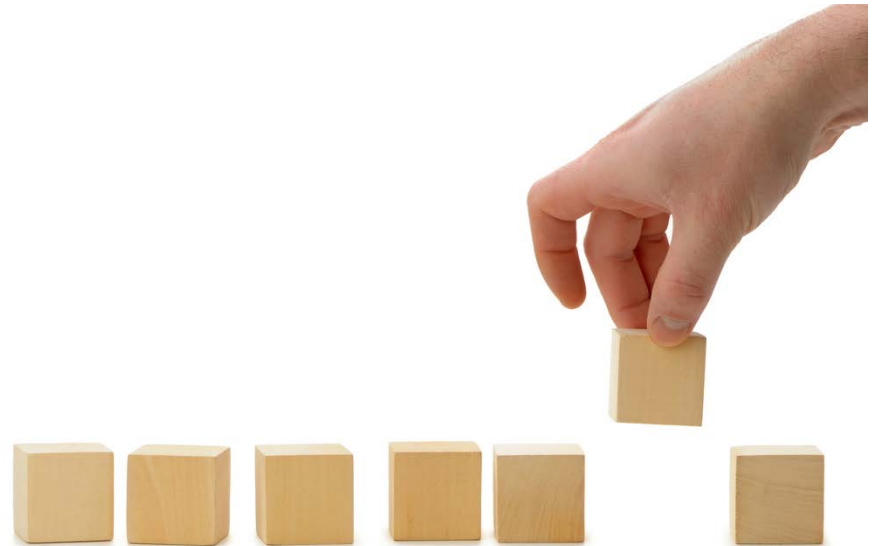
Writing Skill Deficits

❑ Structure^{1,21}

- Grammar
- Sentence structure
- Paragraphs

❑ Style^{1,21}

- Transitions
- Citation format (APA)
- Plagiarism^{13,14,16,17,21}
 - Inadvertent or deliberate
 - 38-60% UG
 - 22% graduate¹⁶
 - Lack of practice paraphrasing
 - Never learning how to cite
 - Losing track of information
 - Copy and paste culture
 - Pressure to achieve
 - Heavy workload
 - Foreign-educated students
 - Learning language from memorization
 - Reverence for original author



Writing Skill Deficits



- ❑ Content^{2,3,7,17,22,24}
 - Inexperience
 - Lack of feedback
 - Unfamiliar with literature and scholarly writing
 - Lack of understanding of assignments
- ❑ Synthesis³
 - Inability to synthesize literature
- ❑ Specialized needs^{4,6,9}
 - Writing for publication
 - Grant writing

Available Knowledge

Changes in Elementary and High School Education^{11,19}

>50 years

- Rules of grammar
- Sentences
- Paragraphs
- Essays

~25 years

- Poetry, journals, memoirs
- Less focus on rules
- Elementary and high school teachers are not trained to teach writing

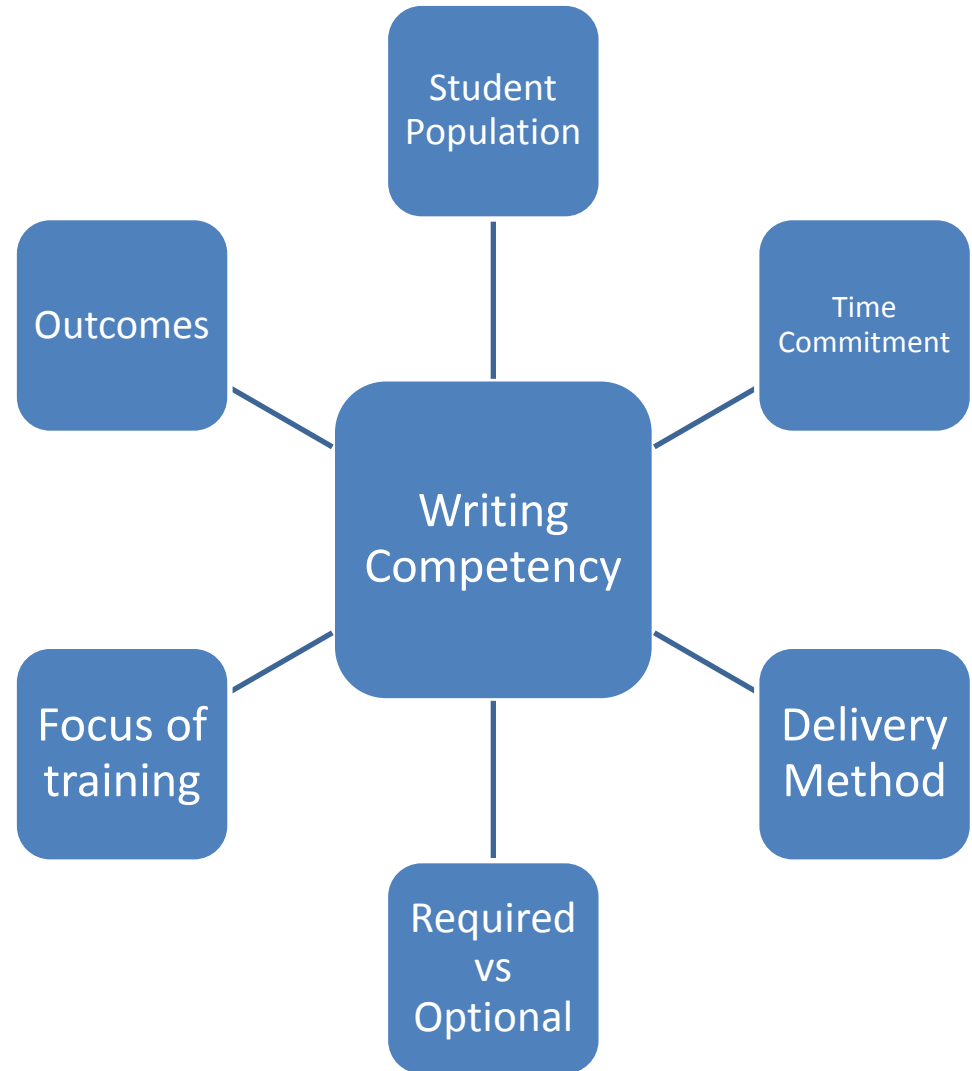
Today

- ***STUDENTS ARE UNPREPARED FOR COLLEGIATE AND GRADUATE LEVEL WRITING***

Available Knowledge:

Approaches to Addressing Skill Deficits in Schools of Nursing

1,2,4,6,9,12,17,21,22,25



Rationale

□ Writing Across the Curriculum¹⁸

- Faculty training
 - Writing skill
 - Program ownership
- Collaboration of students and faculty
- Core belief - writing benefits:
 - Development of writing ability
 - Learning about subject matter

□ Challenges to evaluation⁵

- Institutions vary in program:
 - Components
 - Administration
- Budget for operations vs. research
- Are improvements due to time or program?
- Evaluation of writing quality is subjective



Recommendations for Evaluating Writing⁵

Faculty

- Faculty attendance at workshops
- Workshop evaluations
- Syllabi
 - Before workshop practices
 - Changes after workshops
- Teacher evaluations
- Faculty publication success

Students

- Journals
- Writing tests
- Free writing
- Compare early to later writing

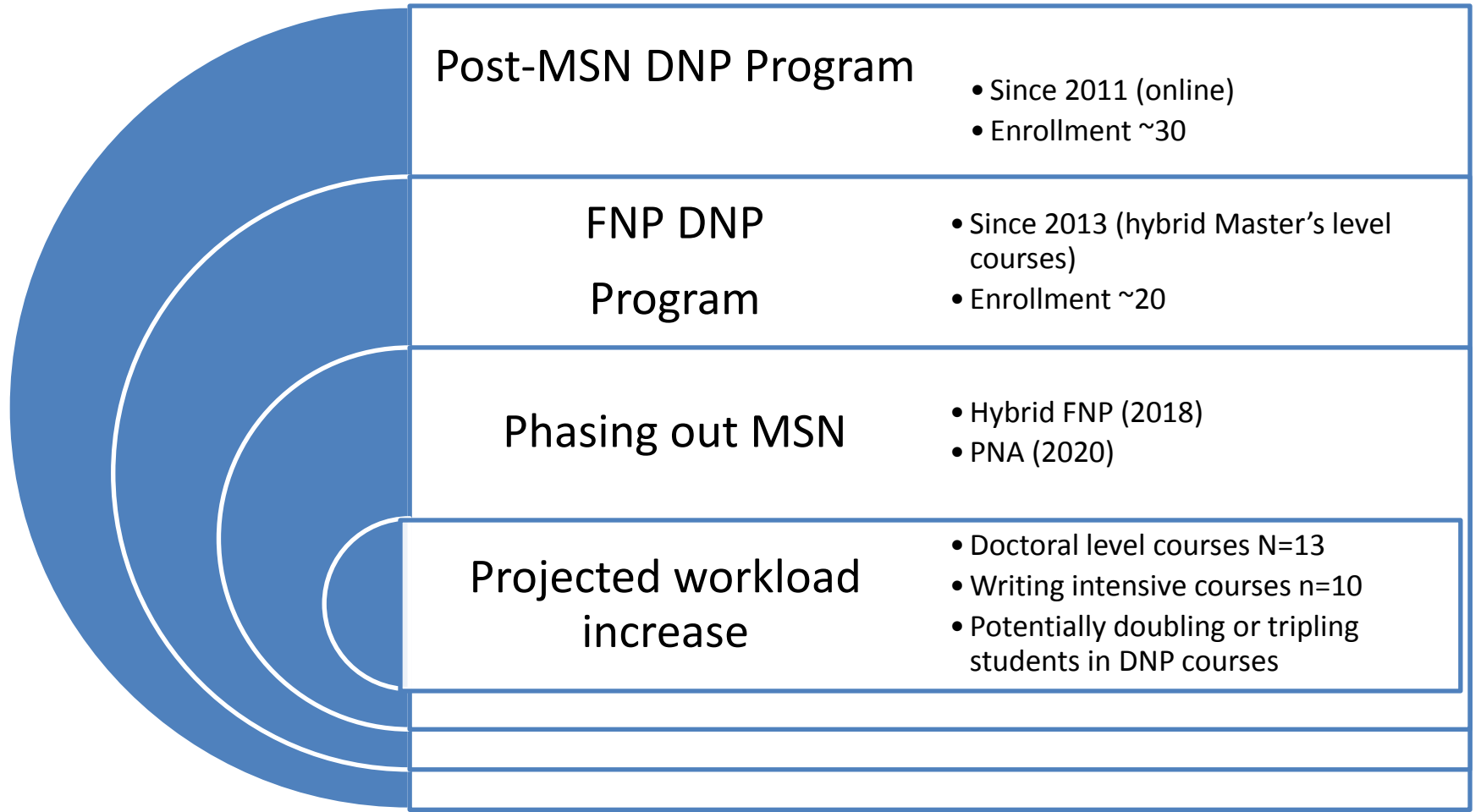


Specific Aims

1. Evaluate faculty use of writing development strategies
2. CQI recommendations



METHODS - Context



Context: Challenges at SMU

Varying Skill

Nursing experience

Basic writing ability (grammar, organization, citation)

Scientific writing ability (critique, synthesis)

Difference in course sequence depending on track

Literature

Lack of skill in searching literature

Limited consumption of research

Context: Challenges at SMU

Understanding Course assignments

DNP Project proposal

DNP Project final paper

Plagiarism Misunderstanding plagiarism

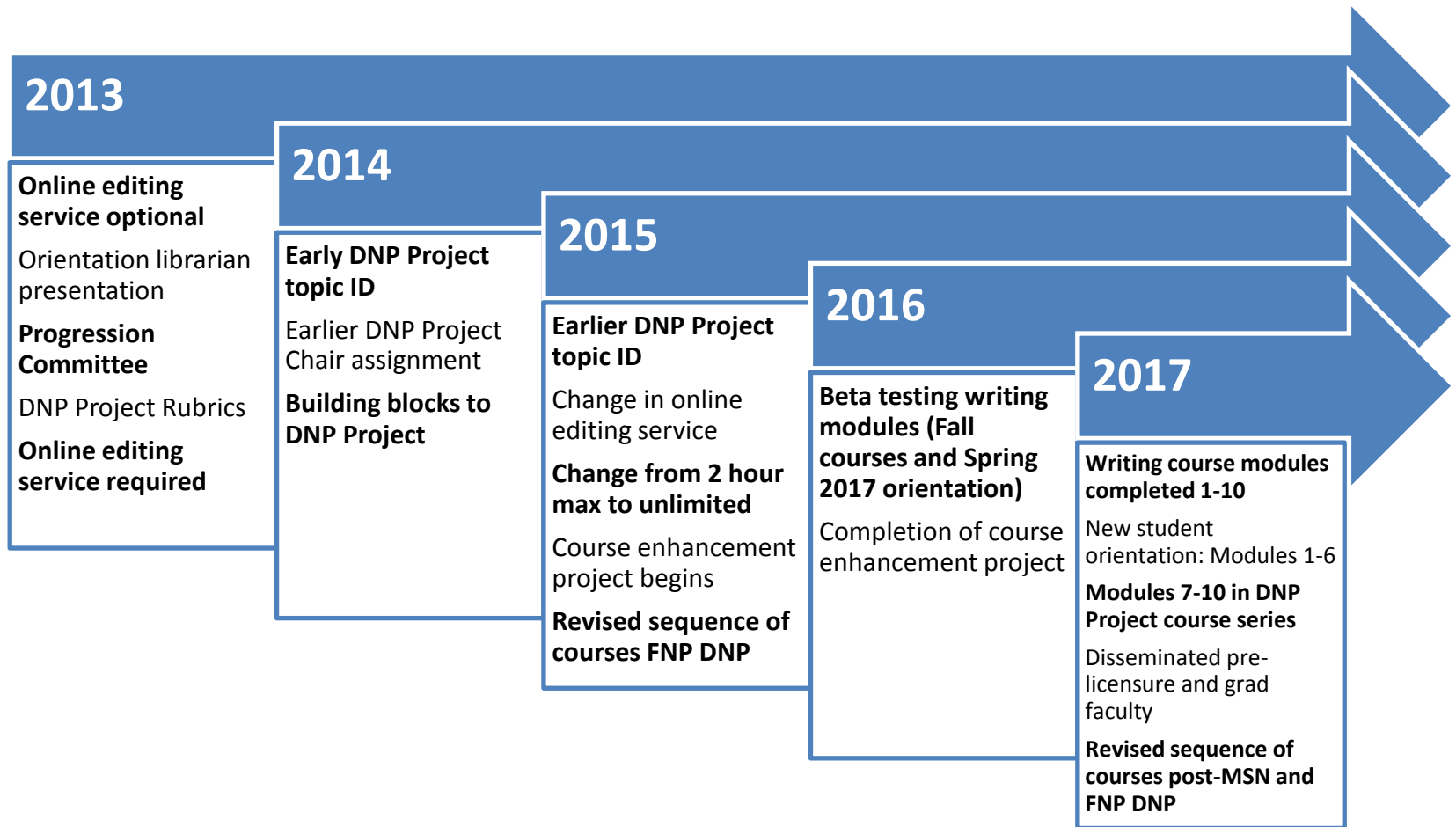
Difficulty with paraphrasing

Unable or opt to not use tools to identify and correct plagiarism

Interventions

*Discussions of individual course strategies and writing support methods were ongoing.

**Cases requiring significant remediation referred to university's academic support services.



DNP Course Enhancement Project

- Template
- User navigation
- Syllabi format**
- Rubric**
 - Development
 - Integration
- Assessments**
 - Creation
 - Alignment (CLOs)
 - Revisions
- Copyright clearance
- Videos
 - Introductory
 - Learning objects
- Instructional Design System Management**
 - Faculty development and coaching
 - Best practices online education

(E. Hoffman, personal communication, 6/616/2017)



Basic and Scientific Writing Modules

Mandatory in orientation and DNP Project course series. Remediation can be assigned. Available for student review in DNP community course.

Orientation

- Introduction / Required Text
- Module 1: Overview of Scientific Writing
 - Goals of writing
 - Audience
- Module 2: Basic Writing Skills
 - Grammar
 - Word choice
 - Sentence structure
- Module 3: Conducting a Literature Review
 - Searching the literature
 - Practice
- Module 4: Plagiarism
 - Definition
 - Examples
- Module 5: Using Citations Skillfully
 - Paraphrasing examples
 - Practice
- Module 6: Format Citations and Reference Lists Correctly
 - APA rules
 - Resources
 - Practice

Integrated in Courses

- ❖ Module 7: Writing and Editing
 - Pre-writing activities
 - Organization
 - Outlining
 - Practice
- ❖ Module 8: Proposal Writing
 - Identify purpose and structure of proposal
 - Practice
- ❖ Module 9: Writing for Publication
 - Identify appropriate journals for intended audience
 - Identify author guidelines
- ❖ Module 10: Communicating with Journal Editors
 - Learn expectations of journal editors
 - Construct cover letters or letters of inquiry

Online. Require various levels of review and feedback by facilitator.

Study of the Interventions

Sources of Data

- Syllabi
- LMS course sites
 - Assignments
 - Instructions
 - Rubrics
- DNP Faculty
 - Meeting minutes
 - Student writing feedback
- End of course reports
 - Faculty evaluation of course strengths and weaknesses



Descriptive Analysis

- Frequency of each strategy used
- Mean # of strategies used
- Use of editing service
- 2013-2017 changes in usage
- Number of student publications

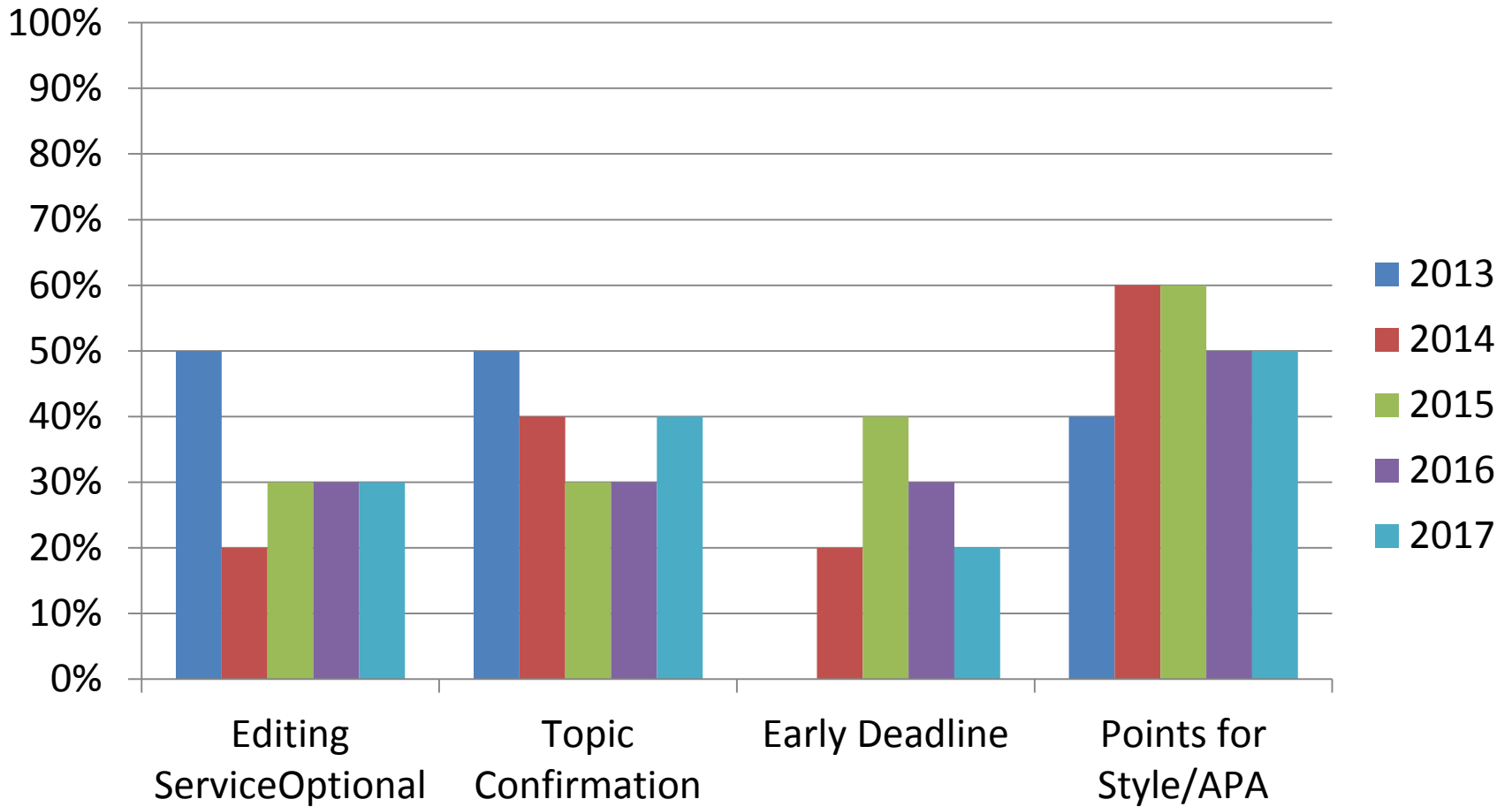


Ethical Considerations

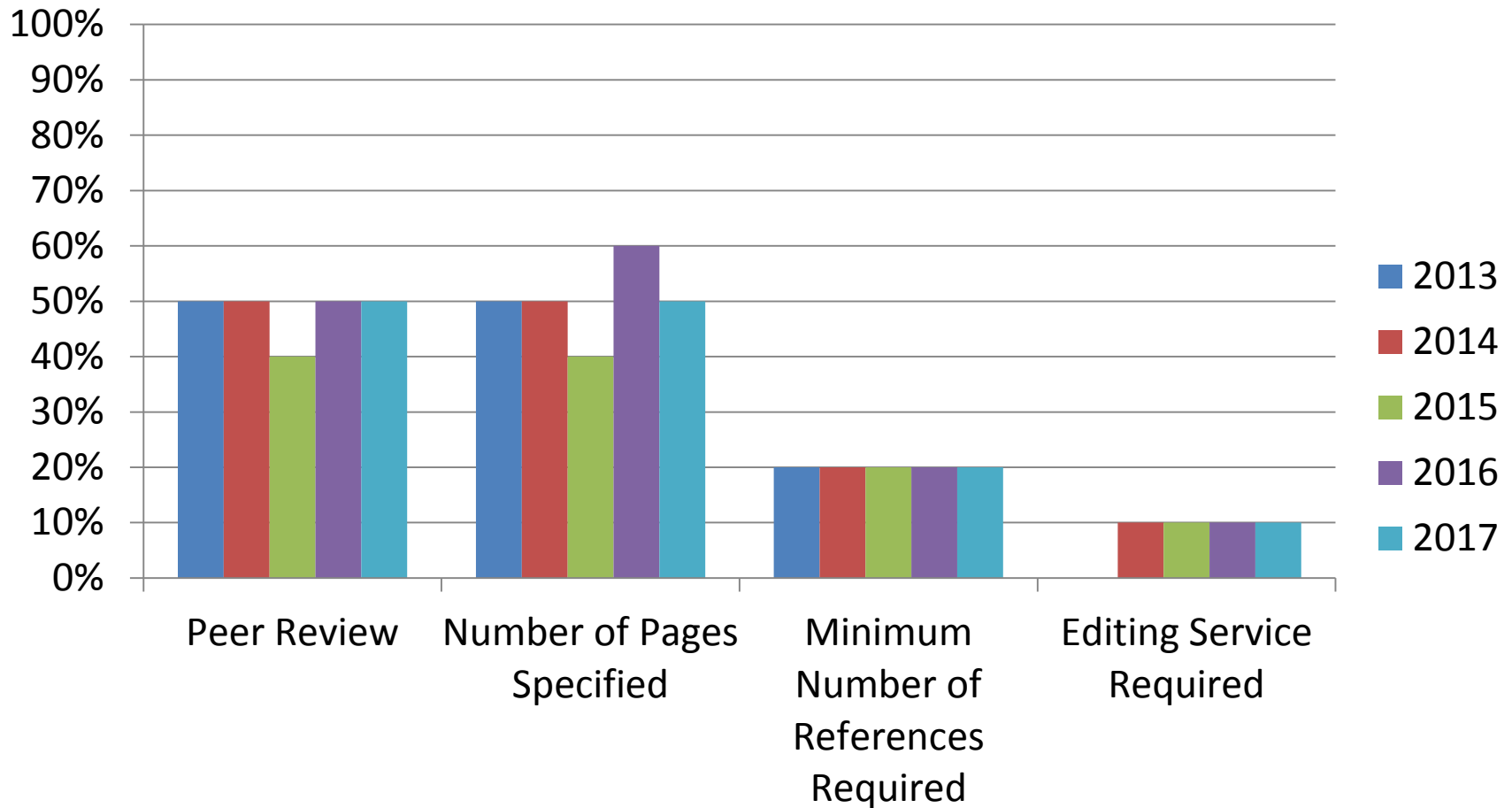
- Quality Improvement
- No individually identifiable data
- No IRB approval required



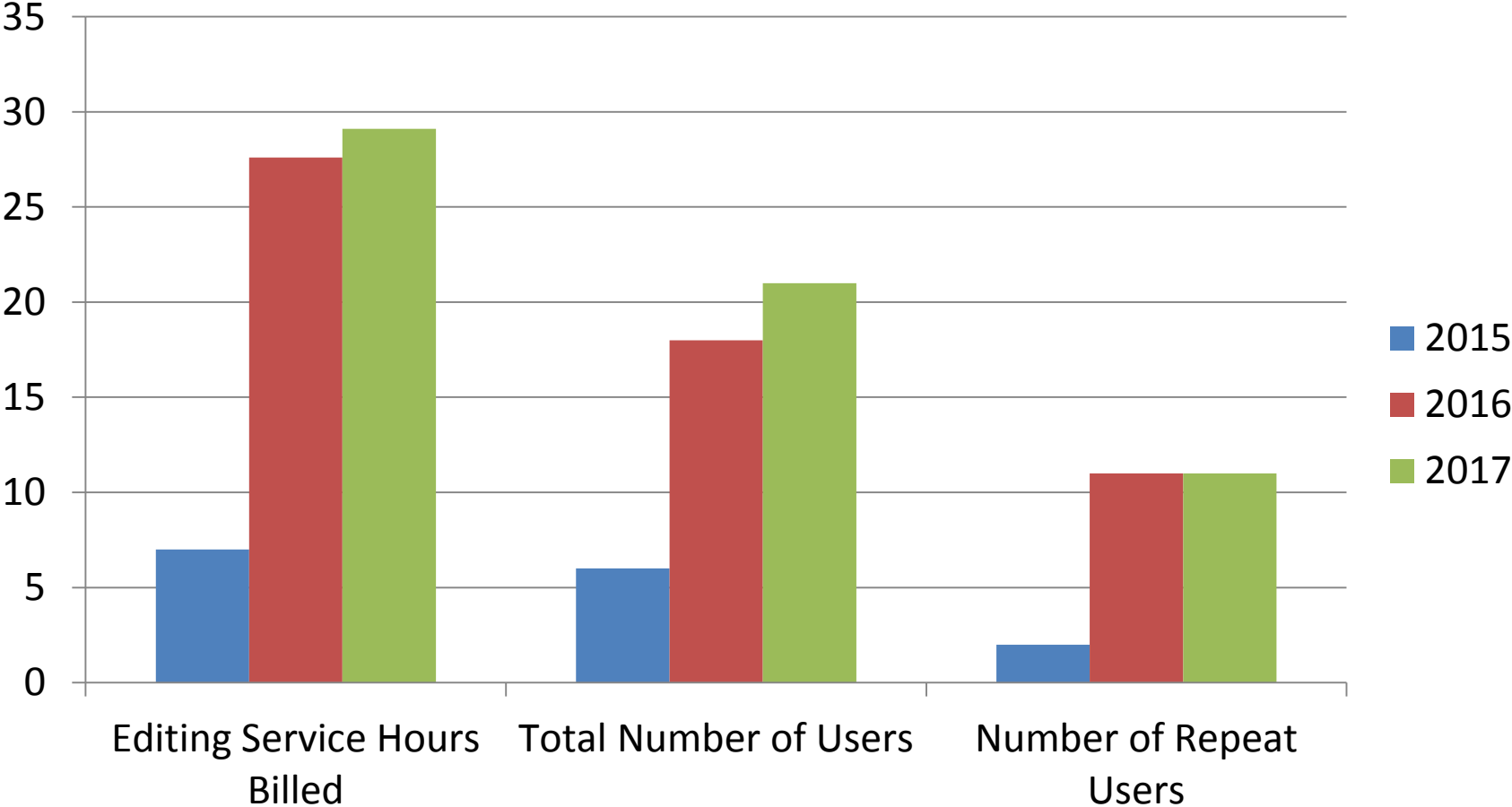
Writing Strategies: Decline in Use



Writing Strategies: No Change in Use

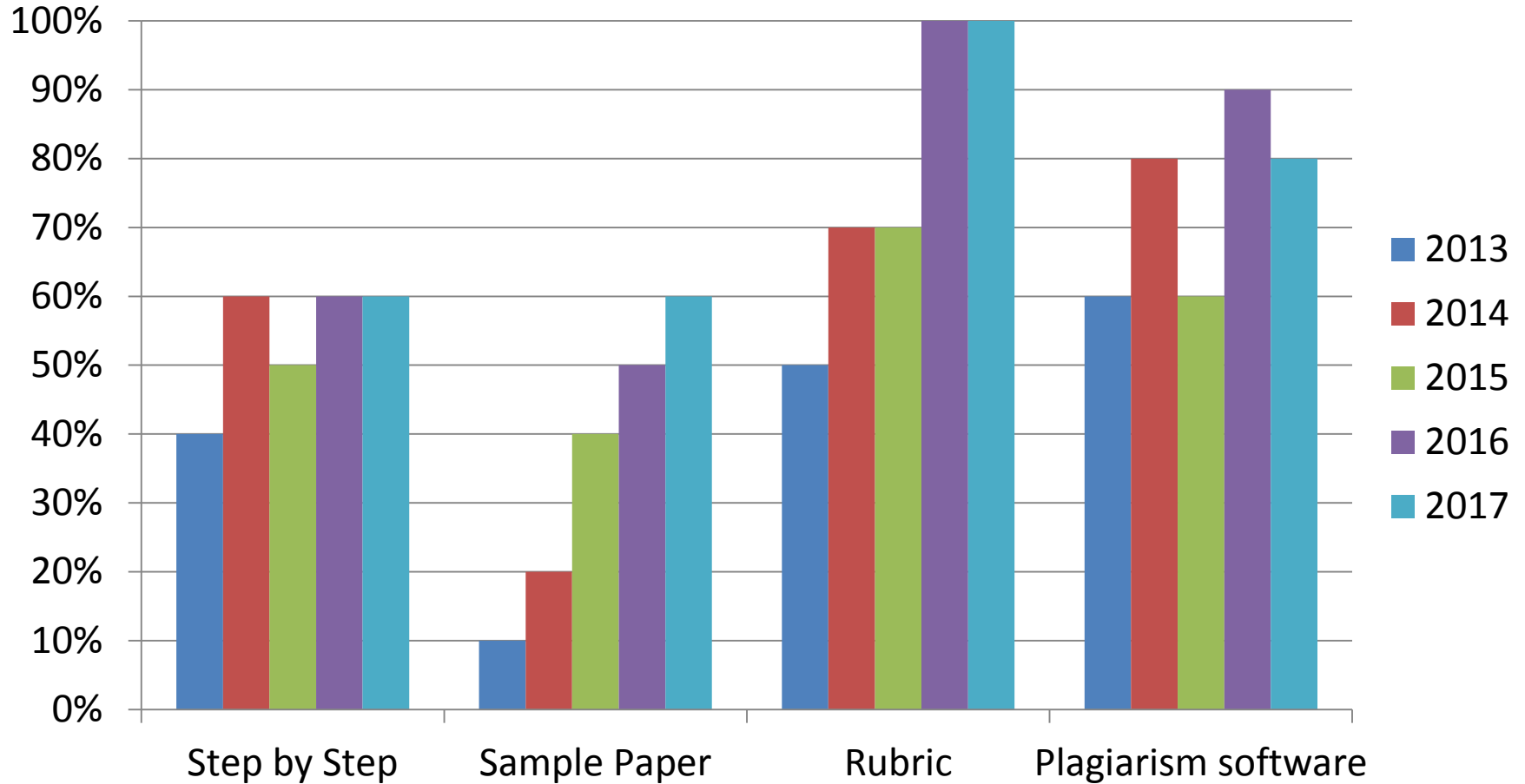


Editing Service Use by DNP Students

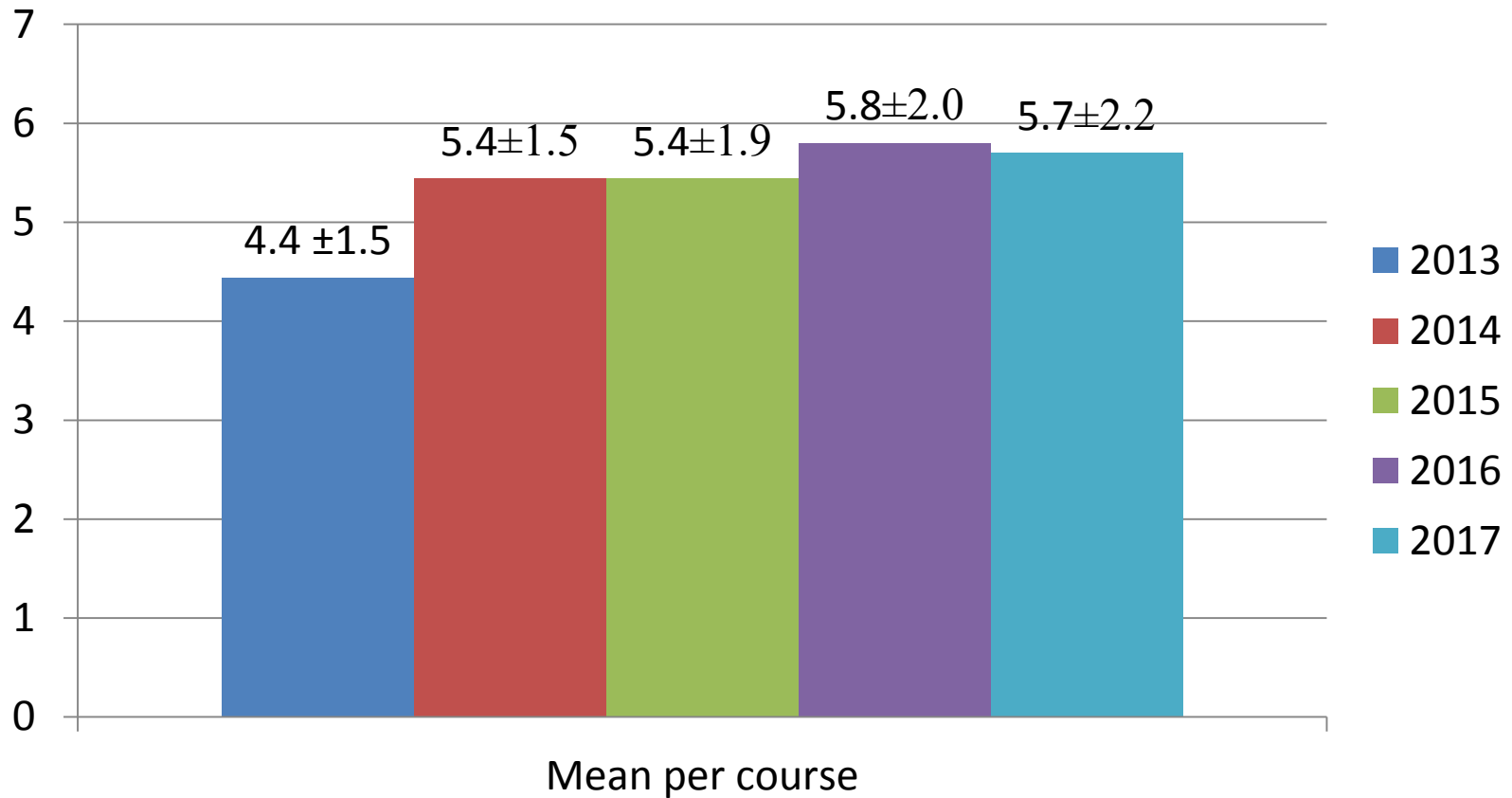


Range of use for repeat users: 2015 (2-3); 2016 (2-6); 2017 (2-7)

Writing Strategies: Increase in Use



Mean # of Strategies Used Per Course



Range: 2013 (3-7); 2014 (3-8); 2015 (4-10); 2016 (4-10); 2017 (3-10)

Most Used Strategies by Faculty

(≥50% of courses)

- *Rubric (100%)
 - Number # of pages specified (50%)
 - Points for style / APA (50%)
- Plagiarism detection (80%)
- Step by step (60%)
- Example paper provided (60%)
- Peer Review (50%)
- Anecdotal faculty feedback:
 - Students **are** meeting objectives:
 - **BUT** with considerable feedback from faculty **AND**
 - one or more revisions required for some students



*Rubrics refined annually.

Interpretation Opportunities for Improvement

Rubric Quality



- Continuous evolution
- Minimum # references
- Minimum # of pages

Plagiarism Prevention



- Be proactive
- Instruct students how to check
- Coordinate deadlines
- Non-punitive response to errors

Interpretation Opportunities for Improvement

Method of delivery?



- Writing instruction within courses
- Connection with in-course activities
- Stand-alone course(s)
- Workshop format

Participation



- Must be MANDATORY
- Pass/fail = ↓ motivation¹³

Interpretation Opportunities for Improvement

Steps/Building Examples



- Providing substantive feedback at each step
- Requiring revision at each step
- Requiring response to feedback at each step



- Demonstrate what you want
- If example contains errors, students will make the same ones
- Be sure example aligns with current rubric

Interpretation Opportunities for Improvement

Peer Review



- Written feedback from peer
- Reading draft aloud to peer
- Grading drafts
- Receiving feedback prior to final submission²³

Feedback



- Providing positive and constructive feedback
- Recognizing emotions associated with writing feedback
- Varied approaches to feedback (oral, written, etc.)^{7,8}

Interpretation Opportunities for Improvement

Mentorship^{7,15,27}



- Faculty development needed for assuming role of writing mentor
- Trust and credibility of faculty influence willingness to accept feedback
- Audio feedback helped students feel connected to course/faculty
- Promoting preparation for publication prior to graduation

Academic Support



- Promote use of writing center
- Might be best for remediation of basic skills rather than scientific writing deficits
- Foreign-educated students can perform as well or better than native English speakers with support^{12,26}

Limitations

❑ Limited objective measurement

- Similar to other studies
- Students supported in meeting course requirements and progress successfully
- Use of writing development strategies and syllabi evaluation are a proxy and consistent with recommended evaluation of WAC programs

❑ Implementation of full set of writing modules in 2017

- Insufficient time for evaluation
- Future evaluation could include:
 - Student performance
 - Faculty workload
 - Satisfaction with training and support

Conclusions / Recommendations



If I waited for
perfection
I would never write
a word.

Margaret Atwood

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QUESTIONS?

