AP ENGLISH AND COLLEGE COMPOSITION: ARE AP STUDENTS PREPARED FOR COLLEGE-LEVEL WRITING?

By

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Abstract

This thesis looks at Advanced Placement English Language (AP) and Composition and First-Year Composition (FYC) in order to determine their comparability. The College Board claims that AP English is equivalent to FYC. The research conducted in order to prove that AP is not comparable enough to FYC consists of discussing the College Board's standards for AP, the Writing Program Administrators' outcomes for FYC, and five colleges and universities' FYC outcomes in the state of Virginia. These outcomes and standards are compared and used to show where there is and is not overlap with these outcomes for students to be exempt from a first-year writing course at the university level. The last aspect is based on dissertations and studies done about the effectiveness of AP and students' reactions to the difference in AP and FYC. The research done and discussed in this thesis doesn't come to a definitive conclusion, but instead I suggest that AP students should have to take an advanced FYC course instead of being offered exemption from FYC. This research provides suggestions for students that are successful on the AP exam and the courses they should be offered upon entering college.

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Introduction

Over the years, Advanced Placement programs have gained popularity because of the rigor these courses offer and the appeal of saving time and money with success on the end-of-year exam. The AP program offers many different AP courses, two of which fall under the umbrella of "AP English." I am focusing my discussion around AP Language and Composition because its focus is on rhetoric and the skills of this course most closely align with FYC. The AP Literature and Composition course focuses on the analysis of literature, which is not the primary focus in FYC, so when I refer to AP English I am specifically referring to the Language and Composition course. I am in agreement with David Jolliffe in that the emphasis should be *placement,* not *exemption* because it is, in fact, called Advanced *Placement* (Hansen & Farris foreword). I will discuss several aspects of AP and FYC to show that an emphasis on placement is essential.

The Advanced Placement (AP) program began in the 1950s because prestigious preparatory schools realized that their advanced students were not being challenged enough. These schools teamed up with the College Board to give these students an opportunity to "begin working on introductory college coursework while in high school and avoid repetition once they matriculated at one of the partnering universities" (Hansen & Farris 17). Following the inception of the AP program, the College Board, in partnership with Educational Testing Services (ETS) administered the first AP exams in 1954. This first AP English class that was developed was the AP English Literature and Composition course. However, in 1980 the College Board developed the AP English Language and Composition course, which, described by the College Board, "cultivates the reading and writing skills that students need for college success and for intellectually responsible civic engagement" (AP Course Description 12). This course, usually

taken in a student's junior year of high school, is most equivalent, according to the College Board, to first-year composition (FYC). Understandably, in an ideal setting, these students would learn the rhetorical strategies necessary for college-level writing, but not all high school situations are ideal, so the question remains whether AP students earning a qualifying score on the exam should be exempt from FYC courses upon entering college.

When I was 24 years old, two years out of my undergraduate program and in my second year of teaching high school English, I was asked to teach AP Language and Composition. I was given an opportunity to attend training, which I will discuss later, but I was vastly underprepared as a teacher to give my students the necessary knowledge to become better prepared for college. The high school in which I taught was given a grant through Virginia Advanced Studies Strategies (VASS) to train their teachers and allow monetary incentives for both teachers and students for success (scoring a 3 or higher) on the end-of-year AP exam. With this grant, students and teachers would both receive $100 for each qualifying score. With this grant, there was also a policy against gatekeeping for students enrolling in AP programs, meaning any student who wanted could enroll in Pre-AP, or AP courses while in high school regardless of previous performance, or GPA. According to an article by the Harvest Foundation, this high school "allows any student who is up for the challenge to enroll in AP courses and experience college-level work" (Harvest Foundation). The theory behind this policy was that any student who took an AP English course was more prepared for college, even if they were not successful on the exam, because they learned skills they would not have learned in another English course. However, I believe this caused more problems for students than it solved. Since there were so many students enrolled in the AP course, the school needed teachers that were not necessarily qualified or prepared to teach these students the skills outlined by the College Board.

I was one of those under-qualified and underprepared teachers. Since my undergraduate focus was on education, I had no background in rhetoric, which is the main focus of the AP English Language and Composition course. Since I was not knowledgeable in this area, I was forced to learn with my students. While I knew the rhetorical appeals and the various rhetorical strategies (or literary terms) that students needed to learn to be successful on the exam (notice what student success was aimed toward), I was not knowledgeable enough to teach them the analysis of nonfiction using these strategies because I was learning along with them. I would prepare the lesson a week ahead of time, read the material and try to formulate an idea of what these students could learn and grasp, but I wasn't sure I was fully understanding the material myself. This reflected poorly on my students because they were aware that I was not as knowledgeable as I should have been, even though I tried my best to command the necessary authority while teaching. The students who were struggling, instead of trying to learn what they could and do their best, began to give up early in the school year. Since these students gave up, it made it harder for me to focus on the students who were achieving at an advanced level because I was doing all I could to motivate the lower level students.

Since I was underprepared, I was sent to AP training during the summer prior to teaching this AP course. This training was paid for and provided by VASS. The training consisted of experienced AP teachers presenting material to new, or experienced AP teachers from schools within the grant's five cohorts. During this five-day training, teachers are given strategies to use in their classrooms that will give students the necessary knowledge to be successful the exam. Teachers were given sample texts, sample lesson plans, and practiced the activities students would be required to do in their classrooms in order to master teaching the skills that the students would need to master.

I attended this training twice; this was during two five-day summer sessions, two fall weekend sessions (the fall sessions are part of the five-day summer sessions as a sort of "check-in" on the school year), and I also participated in the grading of AP mock exams. This training, ideally would give me strategies that are helpful for teaching skills students would need for college success, was centered around the idea of getting students to achieve on the AP exam. Since VASS, and not the College Board, provided this training and their goal was to get the state of Virginia to have a high percentage of students succeed on the AP exam, this training was geared toward giving teachers lessons and activities that would foster this success.

During the training, each of the five days was geared toward a different part of the exam. One day was dedicated to the multiple-choice section of the exam and each subsequent day was dedicated to each of the open-ended essay questions; rhetorical analysis, synthesis, and argumentative. Since I will be focusing mostly on the writing skills students are, ideally, receiving in an AP course, I will only discuss the training focused on the essays. The training was divided by previous trainings. In other words, teachers who attended the training the previous year were in one training and teachers attending the training for the first time were in another training. This was to make sure the second year training was giving teachers different strategies than they received the previous year.

The days of training centered on writing skills consisted of going over the rubrics for the AP exam and the different essay questions. After going over a question, we would read and grade several released exam essays based on the AP exam rubric. We would each discuss the score we gave and then as a group we would discuss the actual grade the essay received and the moves that student made in order to decipher what strategies should be taught in the classroom. This, already, shows that the training would be based on only teaching students the skills that

were necessary for getting a successful score on the exam. There was no emphasis on process writing; in fact, we were told that revision was not possible because of time restraints (time restraints created by following the VASS suggestions). Our main focus was to be on getting students to write under time constraints on a regular basis because they only had two hours to write three well-developed essays. This was even focused toward formulaic writing. The training gave teachers strategies for thesis statement template for the synthesis and argumentative essays and another formulaic thesis for the rhetorical analysis essay. The template is: Because ___(data/support)___, therefore ___(claim/assertion)___, since___(warrant)__. The template developed for these two essays is based on Toulmin's uses of argument, which he claims is "only the beginning" of a well-developed argument. (Toulmin 97-107). While it is good to get students to begin writing using templates, there was no move to get students to begin to develop their own thesis statements—the focus was on mastery of the formula and nothing further. This is the same as the focus on the rhetorical analysis essay. The following formula for thesis statements gears students toward the typical five-paragraph format: In (title of piece), (the author) uses _____, _____, and _____ (three rhetorical strategies) in order to _____(prove his purpose). While the idea of beginning with templates for students to understand how to begin to develop their thoughts is a good start, the fact that neither of these templates are strayed from insists on teaching students to memorize the formula because following that formula would allow them success in writing these essays. Freshman composition, on the other hand, works to get students to use templates at the beginning, but then use their knowledge do develop a style that works best for them, as writers and their rhetorical purposes. In order to be able to do college-level work, according to Sullivan, a student must be able to "discuss and evaluate abstract ideas" because "good writing can only be the direct result of good

reading and thinking" (Sullivan 16). For a student to be able to think through abstract ideas and read and think well gives them the skills to think through the rhetorical situation and develop their own writing style based on previous knowledge.

Since this was a grant offered by VASS, each school was given the materials for AP students to take a mock AP exam in March, which would be graded by experienced AP readers and would give each teacher a breakdown of their students' scores. AP teachers are expected to use the mock exam scores to focus the last two months of class time toward skills that needed strengthened before the exam in May. The first year I taught AP was the last year that VASS would pay for experienced AP readers to grade mock exams. The next year, while I wasn't teaching AP, I was asked to be a reader. Being an essay reader consisted of an eight to ten hour marathon session of calibrating scores and grading essays. We were first given essays that were released by the College Board (because the mock exam was the released AP exam from the previous year), so we could calibrate our grading to make sure all readers were on the same level. We were then given a stack of exams and we were to grade one of the three questions (rhetorical analysis, synthesis, or argument). This experience taught me that schools with a better academic standing than where I taught were still teaching their students to write the same way. Granted, I don't know what these teachers were doing in their classroom, but what I noticed is that most students were using the thesis statement templates mentioned above in their essays. Based on this experience, it is evident that most of the schools in the VASS cohorts were teaching skills specific to the exam.

While the skills that we could have learned for transference to our students were accessible, the focus was on skills for an exam. We were told that if we were required to do a research paper that we should get that over with at the beginning of the year, so it did not

interfere with exam prep. The idea of "getting this over with" emphasizes that this is not of importance in the AP classroom. Even though research is imperative in college, these skills were not necessary for AP English because the research, essentially, was already done for them on the synthesis question of the exam. When done correctly and in the ideal AP classroom, students are able to learn the necessary skills to become successful on the AP exam, without having to focus primarily on the test itself.

While every effort was made to try to give me the necessary training and material that was needed, I still piggybacked on the other AP Language teacher for her support. This teacher was more experienced and prepared than I for teaching AP, so naturally I was going to lean on her for support. Little did I know that this support was going to be as demanding as it was. In a study done at one major university it was noted that "the curriculum of high school AP courses has never been and is not now standardized, although the College Board does offer printed materials and summer workshops to help high school teachers plan an effective curriculum to prepare students for the AP tests" (Hansen, et al 465). The College Board audits the course syllabi for all courses with the AP label, in an effort to make sure their AP courses are equivalent to college courses in the same subject. Since it was only my second year teaching high school and my first year teaching AP, I was not required to create my own syllabus. Instead, I was given the syllabus of the other AP Language teacher to "modify" it to my needs. In other words, I was to use the course description and necessary course goals, but change the calendar to meet my needs. The syllabus, while using the wording of the College Board, still outlined a course that was not focused around skills that are equivalent to college-level courses. Since an experienced teacher already did my syllabus for me, the College Board approved it. Clearly, there are flaws in the system and according to Hansen, "a teacher who submitted a syllabus complained the audit

amounted to an "exercise in producing a syllabus, with no way of knowing that what's on paper is what's being taught in the classroom" (Lewin qtd. in Hansen & Farris 23). There is no system the College Board has devised that will follow up on the administration of the course syllabus in the classroom. However, in my case, I was given approval to begin teaching and all my teaching was focused toward student success on the AP exam in May.

In order to teach my students to be successful on the AP exam, I focused my course around a weekly schedule that was broken into three larger categories. The schedule was broken into the three larger categories of rhetorical analysis, synthesis, and argumentation. These three major categories are, in fact, the three open-ended essay questions on the AP exam. Within this larger schedule, my class was broken down into a weekly schedule. This weekly schedule consisted of one timed essay (based on the larger category), and every Friday students were given a practice, timed, multiple-choice exam. The essay questions and the multiple-choice exams were retrieved from the College Board's AP Central website. Most of these questions were released AP exams from previous years, or practice tests uploaded from the College Board's exam practice for students. In order to be sure that students were given the necessary experience for the exam, each practice essay was graded by the AP exam rubric, and that was translated into a letter grade. Each quarter (every nine weeks) students were expected to improve their writing based on the score they were given and the comments made on their papers. There was no revision process, no peer review, no student-teacher writing conferences, or any chance for students to reflect on their writing experiences. According to Bartholomae, "expert writers…can better imagine how a reader will respond to a text and can transform or restructure what they have to say around" a shared goal (Bartholomae 609). Being able to respond to what readers expect and developing a response based on a shared purpose is the mark of a writer with

the skills necessary to respond to any situation. Furthermore, AP programs do not develop audience awareness as much as FYC programs do and having the ability to tailor writing to the intended audience gives writers the skills necessary to write in any rhetorical situation. Bartholmae goes on to say, "teaching students to revise for readers…will better prepare them to write initially with a reader in mind" (Bartholomae 609). Being able to have an intended audience in mind is the first step to addressing the appropriate rhetorical situation, but revision is essential to the writing process. At the college level, students are expected to revise with their intended audience in mind and address the needs of that audience as they develop their writing further. My course did not allow for revision to help students write with their reader in mind. Instead, they were just expected to know how to improve based on their grade and the rubric associated with that essay. There were times during the week when I would pull good and poor examples from students' writings and we would discuss what made them good or poor, but there was no personal ownership of their writing or any way for them to recognize what they need to improve upon individually; it was more of a "don't do this, do that" lesson based on sample writings from the class. Moreover, students did not have to write a research-based paper, nor were they given the opportunity to revise many of their papers; the only revision opportunities they were given were optional. The option of revision was there only if they wanted to receive a higher grade on a timed writing. Naturally students did not take advantage of this because it was extra work and those that did take advantage of it only did so because they were concerned about their GPA.

I go into so much detail about my experience in AP training and AP teaching because that is what has driven my research. I know that my experience is less than ideal, and not all AP teachers focus their classes around the exam. I know that there are AP teachers who allow for

process writing, research, and emphasize revision. However, my experience can be similar to many AP teachers across the country. Since the College Board does not have any standards, but instead a set of skills, that allows for a lot of wiggle room when it comes to the classroom. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it is a cause for concern when it comes to the exam scores being accepted for FYC credit.

In order to determine whether qualifying scores on the exam should allow students to be exempt from FYC courses, I will begin my discussion of the AP program and its comparison, if any, between FYC. In Chapter one, I will discuss the goals of AP Language and Composition, the Writing Program Administration (WPA) outcomes for FYC, and five college's goals for FYC courses. The five colleges I will discuss are Radford University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Mary Baldwin College, Christopher Newport University, and Patrick Henry Community College. I will discuss, also, what scores these colleges accept for FYC credit and whether these students are still required to take an advanced writing course upon entering college. I will use the discussion of AP, WPA, and colleges to determine the overlap in outcomes for students. I will also discuss whether the overlap in these areas is sufficient to claim that AP and FYC are equivalent. Using that information, I will transition into chapter two where I will discuss three dissertations and studies done on the AP classroom, specifically on the AP essay. I will discuss the parameters of each study and how each determined their findings. I will then discuss their data and my interpretation of that data. While I am not trying to use this chapter to disprove their findings, I am simply using their data and my interpretation to show that there is not enough of an overlap in AP and FYC to warrant exemption. Specifically, I will show that each study's data warrants an advanced writing course at the university level that AP students, who are successful on the exam and don't want to take the honors track, will take in order to be

oriented to the expectations of the academy. Students need a course that orients them to the academy because even the ideal AP classroom cannot teach them all of the necessary skills for college-level writing because students in AP produce "teacher-directed prose" instead of audience-directed prose (Lunsford, Kiser, & Coxwell-Teague 97). The need for an advanced course is because students need to "learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community" (Bartholomae 605). Students need to know what the academy expects from its writers. I will acknowledge that the driving force for taking AP and being successful on the exam is that it saves students and their parents time and money because that is the ultimate appeal of the program. Lastly, in my conclusion I will bring all of this information together, discuss the overall implications of the information presented in each chapter, and discuss the limitations of my discussion. Furthermore, I will advocate for the necessity of collaboration. This collaboration needs to take place between high school AP teachers, college writing instructors and administrators, and the College Board. I know that the College Board, every few years, collaborates with colleges to determine whether their skills are transferring to college, but there is no collaboration between all three parties involved. In order for this program to be successful collaboration is necessary, but this collaboration will not trump the need for college freshman to have a course in college-level writing. I will also discuss in my conclusion future research opportunities based on my findings.

Chapter 1

The College Board developed The Advanced Placement (AP) program in order to give students the ability to "pursue college-level studies while still in high school" (AP 5). The College Board offers a multitude of AP courses for students from English to Foreign Languages and "each AP course is modeled upon a comparable college course, and college and university faculty play a vital role in ensuring that AP courses align with college-level standards" (5). There are two English courses that have the AP label: AP English Language and Composition, which is typically taken during a student's junior year, and AP English Literature and Composition, which is typically taken during a student's senior year. The AP English Language and Composition course, according to the College Board, closely mimics the First-Year Composition (FYC) courses at most American (and several international) colleges and universities because of its focus on "rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts and the development and revision of well-reasoned, evidence-centered analytic and argumentative writing" (8). While these outcomes are quite similar to what students are expected to learn in FYC courses, the AP program does not have quite enough checks and balances to maintain academic consistency throughout the US and international school systems to justify students' complete exemption from FYC. By looking at the AP English Language and Composition course description and the College Board's writing outcomes for these students and comparing them with five colleges and universities in the state of Virginia, it will become easier to see why students should have advanced *placement* rather than advanced *exemption* when it comes to FYC.

The College Board has outlined, in their AP course description, the focus of the course curriculum for AP Language and Composition. Since writing is not the only focus in AP, there are course outcomes for nonfiction analysis; however, since the focus of this argument is the

inconsistencies between writing outcomes for AP and FYC, the outcomes for nonfiction analysis are not important at this time. There are, however, twenty pages of description dedicated to reading and analysis skills[1], while there are only twelve pages dedicated to writing outcomes. It may seem inconsequential, or it could be that it takes more to describe the various analysis skills, but it already seems as though the emphasis is more on the analysis of nonfiction than it is on the development of writing skills. While reading and the ability to analyze texts is important in the writing process, developing those reading skills is not the only way to develop students' writing skills.

There are several writing outcomes that students are expected to achieve in order to be successful in the course and on the end-of-year AP exam. The College Board begins their writing guidelines with three major areas and then breaks those categories down into several smaller areas as they relate to the three open-ended essays that will appear on the AP exam. The first of these writing standards is "writing from source material" (AP 31). The College Board notes the importance of analyzing and synthesizing sources in a student's undergraduate coursework, so they emphasize it in the AP classroom. The ability to understand, evaluate, and use sources in one's writing is essential, but the College Board points out that understanding how to properly cite sources is also of importance. Each of these standards is extremely significant in college-level writing, so it is understandable that teachers should show their students the proper ways to use and cite sources in their own papers. The second major area that is noted in the course description is "organization of writing" (AP 31), which deals with moving students past the typical five-paragraph essay into more sophisticated organization styles. The focus on templates, according to the course description, "offers organizational structure that can help insecure,

[1] For more information about the reading outcomes for these students, see the AP Course Description.

novice writers begin to put their ideas on the page, [but] prolonged and exclusive reliance on such formulas encourages a rigid adherence to language form over language function" (31). This is extremely important when it comes to writing at the college level, and students enrolled in an advanced placement course should be ready to move away from formulaic writing. Moving away from formulaic writing includes being able to assess the rhetorical situation and the needs of the desired audience, and then responding accordingly. This, I have found from my teaching experience, is hard for undergraduates to understand and master, so most high school students would, more than likely, find this hard to grasp as well, which is why it is important to have students understand the function of the language over the form of language, but formulaic writing only achieves the latter. The third, and last, major area is "writing process." This is emphasized in every college writing course across the nation, so it is something that should be stressed in every high school classroom, not just AP. Moreover, the College Board notes that AP "should offer students opportunities to recognize and develop their own writing processes, helping them to realize that no single composing process works for all writers in all situations" (32). While many writers have their own writing processes, there are a few components of the writing process that occur frequently in the typical writer's process. These components include drafting, teacher and peer feedback, and several revisions, which can be time consuming. However, each of these areas is of prominence in the college classroom, and the College Board is on track with FYC in suggesting that AP teachers focus on these areas as well as the areas needed for success on the exam.

The AP exam consists of three open-ended essay questions, which students have two hours and fifteen minutes to complete. There is a considerable amount of reading that needs to be done for two of the three essays, so the fifteen minutes includes time for reading the necessary

source materials (45). Essentially, students have two hours or less to write three well-developed essays. The first of the three essays discussed in the course description is argumentation. This essay is designed to assess students' ability to use critical thinking skills to

> read and analyze different kinds of arguments, examine different structures of argumentative writing, analyze the unique rhetorical features of arguments that demonstrate…particular purposes or intents, examine the appropriateness of using different kinds of evidence to support a claim, assess the critical role of audience in writing an effective argument, effectively synthesize information and perspectives from research, and develop the habit of thinking about argument as a way to participate in a conversation (32).

In order to achieve these goals, the College Board suggests using one of two forms of classical argument: Rogerian or Toulmin[2]. Both of these types of argument are based on formulas that help writers to develop their arguments in a logical manner. The Rogerian argument has four steps: the introduction, which describes the issue with appropriate evidence and demonstrates the understanding of other positions; the context, which describes ways in which the alternative contexts would be valid; the writer's position, which states the position on the issue and presents appropriate situations in which that position would be valid; and lastly, the benefits to the opponent, which explains how someone, who disagrees with the writer's position, would benefit from adopting the new position. The Toulmin method uses similar ideas, but in a slightly different organizational pattern. This model begins with the claim and the evidence and examples to support the claim; next is the warrant, which states the logical and persuasive connection between the claim and the evidence, proposes a principle to justify the claim and presents a

[2] Rogerian and Toulmin methods following are paraphrased from the AP Course Description pgs. 33-34.

shared value with the audience; after the warrant comes the qualifier, which places limits on the claim; and finally the conditions of rebuttal, which address potential objections, or opposing viewpoints. These models give teachers options to begin the school year with templates that students should be able to make their own, per the College Board's suggestion of getting students to move away from formulaic writing. These templates also give students the skills to critically think through other arguments and, ideally, create a style of argument that works best for their own writing style.

The second essay discussed in the course description is the synthesis essay. In order for students to prepare for this essay, they need the "ability to read texts rhetorically" (36). This gives students the necessary skills to analyze how texts that disagree may agree in some aspects or vice versa. There are three steps outlined to help students develop these skills. Step one is authentic inquiry "motivated by questions for which readers genuinely want answers, not by desire to affirm preexisting positions" (37). This step is to teach students that researching a topic and synthesizing that information comes from understanding and asking questions that they genuinely want answered instead of focusing on ideas they already strongly believe. Step two is linking the sources, which gives students the skills "to comprehend the major claims in the texts they consult, understand how these claims are substantiated, and identify how they might appeal to intended or unintended audiences" (37). Since argumentation is not just about writing to an audience that agrees with the writer, it is important that students develop the skills necessary to use the synthesis to analyze their research for different audiences. The third step is the source-informed argument, which includes "sophistication of thought, effectiveness (development) of argument, and unity/coherence" (37-8). In other words, students should be able to look at different viewpoints, develop their position completely and thoroughly, and complete their

argument with effective transitions and appropriate sources. In order for an argument to make sense to the audience, the writer needs to be sure to explain things thoroughly, even if it makes complete sense to them without elaboration. This is because readers cannot always follow the thought processes of the writer, so it is the writer's job to use transitions, elaboration, and appropriate sources to allow their reader to follow their thought processes. These same skills are also applied to the third essay, the rhetorical analysis essay.

These essays, while teaching students valuable skills, are centered on only one aspect of rhetoric—the art of argumentation. Both the synthesis and argument essays ask students to use previous knowledge and given sources to develop their own and analyze the arguments of others. The rhetorical analysis essay typically asks students to analyze a non-fiction piece that is, again, argumentative. This leads students to believe that rhetoric equals argument, but it is much deeper than that. Andrea Lunsford defines rhetoric as the "art, practice, and study of human communication" (American Rhetoric). Lunsford's definition is a more accurate depiction of rhetoric and what FYC courses expect from their students. Colleges expect their students to understand how to form their own, informed opinions and to use the various modes of communication above and beyond argumentation, something that the College Board does not acknowledge in their course description.

The third essay on the exam is not specifically outlined in the course description because the skills students learn for analyzing sources are typically the same for the rhetorical analysis essay. According the College Board, "students first develop their skills in rhetorical analysis as they study the ways in which a writer supports a particular claim. Then, students create their own arguments, applying some of the techniques they've studied in rhetorical analysis" (39). What this really means is that if teachers focus on the skills for the argument essay and the synthesis

essay, students should be able to apply those skills to the analysis of another author's writing. Since the majority of the exam score (55%) is based on these essays, most teachers place more emphasis on writing than on the multiple choice portion of the exam. The course description does not have suggestions on teaching necessary skills or assessing students' multiple choice abilities, but instead they give suggestions for formative and summative writing assessments for teachers because, again, the skills students learn from their writing can be applied to the multiple choice section of the exam, as well (AP 45).

Formative and summative assessments are necessary in any classroom because they allow students to write and develop their writing skills without having to worry about grading or scoring. Formative assessments work in the AP classroom, according to the College Board, because they "provide feedback about their performance at a time and in a way that will help them to improve their performance either on that particular task or on a future task" (AP 39). Skills based courses use formative assessments because they are low-stakes writing tasks that give teachers an idea of student weaknesses, and also allow students to recognize their own weaknesses. Since these tasks are low-stakes, students will not be afraid to try new things or work on skills they are struggling with because these assessments will not drastically or negatively affect their grade. This also saves teachers grading time because they are focusing on developing student skills instead of assigning a grade for each of these assignments. Summative assessments, conversely, are writings that are not expected to be revised or resubmitted, but instead "provide a single, summary evaluation of student performance" (39). Since grades are important to school districts in deciding whether a student moves on to the next grade or subsequent courses, summative assessments are important. Summative assessments also allow teachers to focus on the types of writings students do on exam day; students are not expected to

revise their essays on exam day and since summative assessments are not expected to be revised or resubmitted, students will have practice for exam day writing expectations. However, the College Board suggests that assessments be designed "to help students improve their writing skills" (39). Both of these writing assessments are important in developing students' writing skills, but are used in different ways and for different purposes. Balancing formative and summative assessments is difficult when a teacher has hundreds of essays to read, so naturally teachers have a tendency to rely heavily on summative rather than formative assessments, because when a student finishes those pieces of writing and the teacher assigns the grade, that assignment is finished and the teacher can move on. Since many high school teachers have many students each year, the act of giving feedback on student papers becomes a daunting task, so instead of nit-picking each and every mistake, it is suggested that "teachers take advantage of mechanisms such as peer feedback, writing workshops, group feedback, miniconferences, and other nonwritten commentary on student writing" (41). However, teachers cannot rely only on the nonwritten commentary, so when they do give feedback on student writing, the College Board suggests that they focus on global concerns, limit the number of comments given, focus on the stage of the writing process, and make use of praise (41). These commenting processes will lighten the load for the teacher, but give students the feedback they need to improve their writing. These types of assessments and feedback will make grading and scoring an easier task for teachers who have hundreds of essays to assess.

The skills students learn throughout the year are supposed to transfer to the end-of-year AP exam. Each exam is exactly the same and is given on the same day nationwide. There are other forms of the exam for English language learners and international students, though. The exams are graded based on the number of multiple choice questions answered correctly (no

points are deducted for wrong answers) and the essays are graded on a 9-point rubric. This is translated into a formula, which produces the 1-5 exam score students receive. The 9-point writing rubric is based on four categories: "unsuccessful (points 1 and 2), little success (3 and 4), adequate (6 and 7), and effective (8 and 9). A score of 5 represents a response that is inadequate and adequate in equal measure" (46). Once the two scores (multiple choice and open-ended essays) are combined, and the student is given an overall score, the College Board equates these exam scores with grades for FYC courses. In other words, a composite score of 5 is equivalent to an "A," a score of 4 is equivalent to "A-," B+," and "B," and a score of 3 is equivalent to "B-," "C+," and "C." This is quite a spread of grades if translated into the college classroom and it is difficult to understand how the single number score of the exam translates into such a wide range of letter grades. In order to understand how grades translate, it is important to understand the expectations of FYC courses. Most universities use the Writing Program Administration outcomes to develop their FYC course outcomes and since the College Board collaborates with college administrators and instructors to develop their course description, the WPA outcomes *should* align with the AP course description.

The WPA produces outcomes for FYC courses based on the needs of the workforce and "what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research and theory" (WPA 1). Instead of calling these standards, the WPA has intentionally titled them outcomes because the measuring of the outcomes is left to the individual institutions and instructors (1). Since we are living in a world that is becoming increasingly reliant on technology and digital processing and composition has become increasingly reliant on digital technology, these outcomes are based on digital technologies, but that doesn't mean print is entirely dead in the classroom. It is noted in the outcomes statement that "writers also attend to elements of design, incorporating images

and graphical elements into texts intended for screens, as well as printed pages" (1). These outcomes are not stopping points, but instead jumping off points for writers as they continue their academic and professional careers. These skills will allow students to move from the general education courses into their major-specific courses and their professional careers with an understanding of the writing context, the intended audience, and the ways to respond accordingly.

The writing outcomes adopted by the WPA are broken into four categories: rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, reading, and composing, processes, and knowledge of conventions. According to the WPA, "rhetorical knowledge is the ability to analyze contexts and audiences and then act on that analysis in comprehending and creating texts" (1). Throughout FYC, rhetorical knowledge is emphasized and by the end of the course(s) students should be able to negotiate various writing contexts, audiences, and genres and the appropriate situations in which to use these skills (1). These skills will allow students to effectively write for their intended purpose and audience when they move beyond FYC. Since every career involves some sort of writing, these skills will help students produce career-specific, well-written, and well-developed texts, which is important to succeeding professionally. Along with rhetorical knowledge, students need the ability to think, read, and compose critically and in order to do so, students will need the "ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts" (2). Being able to read a text critically allows students to analyze a text for its meaning and to synthesize that information in their own writing, or to use similar strategies in their own writing. This goes hand-in-hand with the knowledge of rhetorical situations, because students will be able to produce writing that is directed toward the rhetorical situation and demonstrates their ability to use necessary analytical skills to interpret the meanings of graphs, charts, and

other visuals they may encounter. While understanding the rhetorical situation and being able to analyze texts critically is important, composing processes are equally important. The WPA states that "composing processes are seldom linear: a writer may research a topic before drafting, then conduct additional research while revising or consulting a colleague. Composing processes are also flexible: successful writers can adapt their composing processes to different contexts and occasions" (2). The process of composing allows writers to use their critical thinking, reading, and writing skills with their rhetorical knowledge to make sure that the structure fits the intended audience and situation. This is one place where the College Board's course description aligns with the WPA outcomes. Both acknowledge that everyone's writing process is different and students need to discover and develop their own process. The composing process, most often, includes "reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing" (2). While many writers use these steps, it is important to note that they may not all happen in that specific order and each writer will develop their own composing process over time. Since editing is the last step in the writing process, it is critical that students understand the conventions appropriate for the genre in which they are writing. Besides the obvious conventions of mechanics, usage, spelling, and citation, there are the conventions that "influence content, style, organization, graphics and document design" (3). While learning about the rhetorical situation and how to respond accordingly, students also need to learn how the conventions of different genres differ and why they differ. This differentiation can include jargon, organization styles and the use of specific graphics that enhance the text. These skills give students the critical thinking and writing skills to respond to the rhetorical situation appropriately. It has become evident that these skills are not things that are to be learned separately or in any particular order, but instead these are skills that need to be learned in conjunction with one another because they

all connect in the writing process and are essential in producing writing that is relevant to the situation.

At this point, I think it is important to discuss the connections between the AP outcomes and the WPA outcomes. On the surface, they seem quite similar; students need to understand the rhetorical situation; think, read, and write critically; understand writing conventions; and understand the composing process. However, the emphasis for AP is more toward argumentation instead of different genres. In academia and in the professional setting not everything one writes is going to be argumentative. My point isn't that the College Board does not outline skills that will help students achieve in college, but that students need to develop skills above and beyond the ability to argue effectively. While understanding the rhetorical situation is important to understanding the correct way to respond, it is evident that, in the AP course, more focus is on developing argument skills instead of understanding how to critically read and analyze texts in order to use similar conventions in later courses and in the workplace. There is importance in understanding how to argue effectively because, of course, much of college level writing will be argumentative, or research based, but most careers will ask people to write in a variety of genres. Most university writing programs will focus their writing curriculum on the WPA outcomes and what they have experienced or discovered from colleagues in different disciplines. Looking at five colleges and universities in the state of Virginia, I will discuss how these courses align more with the WPA outcomes and less with the AP outcomes.

In order to get a cross-section of the types of FYC courses offered in the state of Virginia, I will discuss the writing requirements for several colleges and universities. The colleges and universities that were chosen are Radford University (RU), Christopher Newport University (CNU), Mary Baldwin College (MBC), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VT),

and Patrick Henry Community College (PHCC). Each of these colleges represents a different population of students and they are different types of schools; two small liberal arts universities, a private women's college, a large state university, and a rural community college, respectively. Not only do these schools all have a different variety of students, but they also are from different areas throughout the state—rural, metropolitan and suburban. Each of these schools accepts AP credit for their English courses, but each school accepts a different score or range of scores. RU, CNU, and MBC all accept a 4 or a 5 for credit. If a student receives a 4 at RU, they may only test out of the first semester CORE course, but if they score a 5, they can be exempt from the entire first year of writing courses, which places them in the higher-level writing courses that build on the skills students learn in the first year courses. For MBC and CNU, since they only offer one FYC course, students with a 4 or 5 will test out of that course; CNU allows students to also test out of an English elective if they score a 5 (CNU also has a sophomore level course that is a year-long course). That means that students at MBC will test out of all college-level writing courses and will have no orientation to college-level writing before entering their major-specific courses. VT allows students to receive a 3, 4, or 5 for credit, but they only count one of the AP English exams. For example, if a student achieves a 3 on both the AP English Language and English Literature exams, VT would only accept one of those scores for credit, not both. Scores of 3 will get students 3 English credits, while scores of 4 or 5 will allow students 6 English credits. That means a student achieving a 4 or 5 will not have a course that orients them to the expectations of college-level writing. PHCC, however, does things a little differently. Since they are in a rural area of Virginia, they partner with five high schools in the area to give students an opportunity to earn Dual Enrollment (DE) Credit. There isn't a guideline or rule established that says students must be enrolled in an AP course in order to take the DE course, but students still

must apply to the school and take the college's placement test before being accepted into the program. It doesn't appear that they offer any credit for AP exam scores, but only offer credit if students have transferring DE credits[3]. These schools offer a variety of requirements, populations, and acceptance requirements, which will give a good cross section of schools to compare with the College Board's AP guidelines.

These five colleges, while they do require entering freshman (who have not exempted out of these courses) to take their FYC courses, have different outcomes for those courses[4]. Even though they may have different outcomes for the course, they also have similarities in terms of what skills students should be acquiring while taking these courses. RU and CNU are both small liberal arts colleges. Since they are the most similar I will discuss their course outcomes together.

CNU only offers one writing course, which is titled "First-Year Writing Seminar." Based on their curriculum catalogue, this course appears to be a one-year or two-semester course that freshman take. This course is similar to Radford's CORE courses, but instead of having a one-year course, Radford breaks theirs into two courses. CNU's outcomes closely align with the WPA outcomes because they want students to practice and learn a variety of writing genres. Since these students are not all going into English or education professions where they would be expected to write essays and research articles for a living, they are also expected to learn reports, analyses, "and other academic genres that position their views within ongoing social and cultural questions" (Christopher Newport 4). Similarly, RU's CORE outcomes, while focusing on college-level writing, also want students to learn the conventions of different writing genres (Radford). Both CNU and RU also want students to learn and use the writing process, in

[3] Information found at each university's registrar or placement office's website. Each website is cited on the works cited page.
[4] See Appendix A for a table that shows the overlap with the WPA outcomes with these five colleges and universities.

particular, drafting, revising, and incorporating both written and oral feedback from both the instructor and peers. Lastly, these two schools want their students to learn the basic conventions of research, evaluating sources, incorporating sources into their writing, and understanding the conventions of different style guides for citation purposes (Christopher Newport & Radford). These same skills are also in conjunction with the skills that MBC outlines.

Similarly to CNU, MBC offers one English course during the first year. There is no indication of whether this course is one semester or one year long. However, their outcomes are two-fold. First, MBC expects their students to learn writing conventions for various genres and using appropriate research and evidence that supports a clear thesis. Second, students are expected to evaluate and synthesize research and use MLA format for citation purposes (MBC). Their course outcomes do not go any further than that for writing, but their expectations still align with RU, CNU, and WPA in the sense that they expect students to understand the rhetorical situation and that they are to learn the writing process and make it their own.

VT's outcomes for FYC directly align with the WPA outcomes because they use the same wording and categories for each of their outcomes and they also outline outcomes that are not from the WPA outcomes. WPA acknowledges that students need to understand emerging technologies, but they don't outline a specific outcome; instead, they leave that up to the specific institutions. VT has taken heed of those suggestions and created their own technological goal along with a goal for oral communication skills. Those goals are "writing in electronic environments," which emphasizes writing with emerging technologies and having an understanding of visual literacies because "students should possess the skill to use visuals as a means of composing and communicating," and "effective oral communication," which gives students the skills to understand how to effectively communicate to a variety of audiences

(Virginia Tech). While all of these schools offer four-year degrees, not all students are willing or able to attend such schools, which leads to a community college such as PHCC.

PHCC offers English or writing courses in two semesters. These courses are to be taken in succession as the second course builds on the skills of the first. The two focuses for writing skills in the first semester course are expository and argumentative writing. In order to obtain these skills, students are expected to learn to evaluate and use research and evidence. They are also expected to follow the writing process and "edit for effective style and usage; and determine appropriate approaches for a variety of contexts, audiences, and purposes" (Patrick Henry). The second course in this sequence builds on these skills and focuses more on learning to "locate, evaluate, integrate, and document sources" (Patrick Henry). All of these universities have very similar outcomes for students who finish (or test out of with AP or writing exams) FYC courses. Even though these schools allow students to exempt out of courses based on AP exam scores, the outcomes of AP and these FYC courses do not align as well as they do with the WPA outcomes.

The College Board works with university professors and scholars in order to make sure their standards align closely with those in the university setting. Since they work closely with people in academia, it is evident that the standards are similar to college level standards, but their focus is quite different. Most universities, like those discussed above, focus their classes on different types of writing: personal, expository, exploratory, argumentative, informal, etc. These are all types of writing that students will need when they enter the workforce, so it makes a great deal of sense to orient students to these different types of writing. Those skills are what the WPA outlines and it is evident that most schools are using those outcomes to develop their writing curriculum. The AP standards, on the other hand, tend to focus more on analytical or argumentative writing. This is a good starting point, but there are more types of writing than just

those two. In the AP course description, most of the discussion on writing in an AP course is argumentation. It discusses the two types of argument in rich detail and briefly mentions the analytical portion. The analysis of readings and how to respond accordingly is more of the focus in the reading standards. While reading and writing go hand in hand, there is only one essay in which students truly analyze a piece of writing—the rhetorical analysis essay. This essay is designed to allow students to show their analytical skills, so there is some focus on expository, analytical writing; however, the other two essays—synthesis and argument—are directed toward arguing a point using sources. Since there are two essays that focus on arguing, that becomes the focus of the AP class. The College Board does recognize that "source-informed argument (a form of research writing) is the predominant type of writing students must perform in their undergraduate coursework," (AP 31) so orienting students toward that type of writing makes sense, but that isn't the only type of writing students will be expected to do in the college classroom, or in their careers. Since students are expected, according to the five universities discussed, to respond to the audience and rhetorical situation, argumentation isn't the only situation students will be asked to write for. Even though students will have been effectively oriented to rhetorical situations and how to analyze them in AP, the level of research and analysis at the college level is not equivalent.

It is not my point to completely diminish the College Board's attempt at creating advanced courses for high school students and helping these students save time and money. These are ideas that are worth merit, but the communication between the College Board, colleges, and high school teachers is not sufficient to produce complete equivalent courses and warrant complete exemption from college level writing courses. There is little evidence from comparing the various standards or outcomes set that there is enough overlap to warrant students

exempting from college level writing completely. This is why I argue that students that score a 4 or 5 should be offered a course that is not tied in with the honors college (because not all of these students wish to obtain an honors degree), gives them an advanced level of material, and orients them to writing as "means [of] joining a conversation of persons who are, in important ways, *fundamentally disagreeing with each other,* or, to make the matter less agonistic, *jointly seeking answers to shared questions that puzzle them*" (original emphasis, Bean 22). This will give them a better chance at success in college and in their professional fields.

While the College Board does try to make sure they have the course audit system to check that teacher syllabi align with the standards suggested, there isn't a clear way to be sure these skills are transferring to the classroom. The valiant effort made by the College Board to make sure that students who qualify for exemption from FYC are prepared for higher level courses can be lost in translation. Knowing that the standards set by both the College Board, WPA, and several universities align in several places makes exemption look good on paper. Moreover, it allows universities, students, and their parents justification for this practice, but just how effective are these practices? Now that I have discussed the standards that are set, the next chapter will discuss how these standards are not necessarily met in the classroom and there is justification for advanced *placement* instead of advanced *exemption*. After all, the title of the course is Advanced Placement, not Advanced Exemption.

Chapter 2

Now that the expectations have been laid out for the College Board, several FYC programs at major Virginia universities, and the WPA, I will discuss the research that has been done in order to better understand that AP students should not be completely exempt from an FYC course. April Holifield-Scott researched the effectiveness of the AP essay based on a survey done by AP exam readers. I will use this study to discuss the implications of the level of implementation of, in both high school and college, the writing expectations set out by the College Board. Colleen Whitley and Deirdre Paulsen researched the perceptions of students who took AP in high school, but committed to graduating with honors from BYU. The honors program requires these students to take the honors FYC course. These students were asked to compare their perceptions of the level of emphasis on various steps and elements of writing in both their AP course and their honors FYC course. Lastly, Ginger Stoker did a study with inner-city, low-income students to try to determine the effect, if any, taking AP has on their enrollment in college. I will use this study to discuss the implications of AP access to minority and low-income students and the role it plays in advocating for an advanced FYC course. This chapter will discuss these three research studies and discuss the implications of their findings. I will not necessarily discuss each individual aspect of their studies, but instead, I will discuss the most important to my argument. I will use their data to explain my interpretation and the implications of my interpretation.

The College Board has their guidelines for writing in their program outline. In order to determine the level of implementation in the classroom, April Holifield-Scott wrote her dissertation on the effectiveness of the AP essay. In this study she used a 50 question survey that was based on the Likert scale. The Likert scale is a five point range from zero to four that allows

the surveyor to measure the level of value and implementation. This survey was given to readers of the AP English Language and Composition exam; a combination of high school teachers and college instructors. Her study was designed to examine "the extent to which a sample of 2010 readers of the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination value and implement the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition (APELC) curricular requirements outlined by the College Board[5]" (Holifield-Scott 20). Furthermore, Holifield-Scott used the data from the surveys to determine whether there was a significant difference between the value placed on and the implementation of the AP curricular standards by high school and college instructors. This particular study is useful because the information is coming from the instructors themselves. These instructors are readers of the AP exam and are familiar with the standards the College Board set forth and the ways students write on the day of the exam. One could assume that these instructors would not only place high value on the College Board's standards, but also implement these standards to the best of their ability. Since the College Board states that AP English Language and Composition and FYC are equivalent, both of these instructors should equally implement these standards. Based on Holifield-Scott's data, there is not enough overlap in some of the more important areas for these courses to be considered equivalent.

Before getting into the details and data of Holifield-Scott's study, it is important to understand the requirements set forth by the College Board for AP readers. In order to qualify as an AP reader, the following criteria must be met:

1. High school instructors must be currently teaching a face-to-face APELC course and have at least three years teaching experience.

[5] For the curricular requirements of AP English Language and Composition see Chapter 1.

2. College/university instructors must have taught within the last three years at least one composition course comparable to the high school APELC course. To ensure comparability, the instructor must, in the application to be a reader, submit a syllabus for the class taught (Holifield-Scott 21).

These requirements are set in place because the College Board wants to ensure that students who take the AP exam are meeting the standards of the AP program and are also writing at a college level. While only so much of the information taught in schools can be shown on a timed exam, these readers are trained on the grading rubric[6] and the AP curricular requirements prior to scoring the essays. Each reader is given only one question to read, so they are familiar with the prompt and the rubric for each essay they score. For example, one table of readers is responsible for the synthesis essay, another table is responsible for the argument essay, and yet another is responsible for the rhetorical analysis essay. There is more than one table for each essay because of the number of students taking the exam. There is a table head for each table that is not responsible for scoring any essays, but periodically checks the scores given to calibrate scoring and is available for questions or concerns readers may have about an essay. There are requirements that must be met in order to be a table head, also[7]. Since these readers have to currently be teaching, the results of this study will be timely and accurate.

Now that it is clear what requirements are set for AP readers, it is now important to understand the logistics of Holifield-Scott's study. The data for this study was determined by using the Likert scale. The scale is as follows:

Value Implementation

[6] For more information on the grading rubric used for the AP English Language and Composition exam, see Chapter 1.

[7] For more information on the requirements of an AP reader, table lead, or Chief Reader see http://professionals.collegeboard.com/prof-dev/opportunities/become-ap-reader

0=no awareness	0=no awareness
1=unimportant	1=never implement
2=somewhat important	2=occasionally implement
3=important	3=often implement
4=critically important	4=frequently implement (Holifield-Scott 22)

The respondents of the survey answered 46 questions about the curricular requirements and the first twenty-three questions are based on the value they placed on that requirement, so in other words, how important they feel that particular standard is and the second twenty-three are based on the level to which they implement that standard in their particular course. Using the data, Holifield-Scott determined whether there was a significant difference in the value placed on and implementation of the curricular requirements. She also used this study to determine the extent to which each party valued and implemented the curricular requirements. Her results showed that there is a "significant difference to which the 2010 APELC high school teacher readers and college/university composition instructor readers value the APELC curricular requirements" (Holifield-Scott 56-7). College instructors, even with overlap with high school instructors in some areas, showed a significantly higher level of valuation for the curricular requirements. Furthermore, "high school teacher readers had significantly higher mean of implementation with regard to five curricular requirements than did college/university instructors…conversely, college/university instructor readers reported significantly higher mean implementation ratings in seven curricular requirements" (Holifield-Scott 57). In other words, the areas in which high school instructors implement more are not comparable to the skills necessary in college level writing. Even though there are only twelve areas in which the implementation is significantly different according to Holifield-Scott, I will argue that the seven areas in which college-level

instructors implement more are areas that are more important to students gaining the ability to develop their writing skills. Overall, it appears that high school teachers place higher value than college instructors on some areas, but implement them less. Since Holifield-Scott's study is broken down into various data points, it is pertinent to discuss each individually and its implication on the comparability of AP English Language and Composition writing curricular requirements to FYC.

The results of Holifield-Scott's study are clear, but just like any data presented it can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Her study may have proven her case that there is no significant difference between the two instructors; I intend to use her data to show that college instructors implement more of the AP standards and those areas are most important to developing writing skills. First, I will discuss each area and the results and then I will discuss the implications of these results.

There are eight categories on the survey that are broken into twenty-three items. The items for each category are the same for both value and implementation. The first category is "value addressing a variety of subjects via a variety of essay forms" (Holifield-Scott 30). The second category is "value writing stages and teacher and peer review" (30). This is broken into two items: proceeding through several drafts aided by the teacher and proceeding through several drafts aided by peers (30). Next is the value placed on "informal contexts and imitation" (31). This is broken down into four items, each of which assesses the value placed on informal contexts "including imitation exercises designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and of the techniques employed by the writers they read," analytical writing assignments based on several genres of readings, expository writing assignments based on several genres of readings, and argumentative writing assignments based on several genres of

readings (30-1). Additionally, the next two items are based on "rhetorical strategies and techniques," each based on the use of nonfiction readings and fiction and poetry to identify "linguistic and rhetorical choices" made by writers (31). The next item is based on the use of graphic and visual images used by high school teachers (32). Research skills is the next category and is broken into two items: "students learning research skills…gaining the ability to evaluate, use, and cite" sources and writings "such as the researched argument paper, which go beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper via the presentation of an argument of their own" (32). Editorial style follows, which is citing sources based on a specific editorial style. The last category is based on feedback and is broken down into nine different items, which range from providing comments on a student's draft before and after revision, providing comments both before and after revision, developing vocabulary, varying sentence structure, using logical organization, balancing detail, using effective rhetorical skills including "controlling tone and establishing and maintaining voice," to "achieving emphasis through word choice and sentence structure" (33-4). The results of this survey and the data produced are important, but before I discuss their importance and the implications this has on students' writing ability, I will discuss the value placed on these items by college instructors.

These categories are the same for both high school and college instructors. The following data points discussed are only about the value placed on the curricular requirements for the AP English Language and Composition course[8]. It is fairly easy for one to value something and still implement the ideas they value. This will be discussed later, but right now I will discuss how these numbers are indicative of the difference between high school and college instruction. The first item is the value placed on writing in a variety of forms. The high school instructors placed

[8] For more information on the data points associated with the different areas, see appendix B.

a mean value score of 3.68 on this particular item. College instructors placed a mean value score of 3.29. This isn't that much of a difference in value placement. If these numbers are associated with the Likert scale and the feelings associated with it, it is clear that this is important to both high school and college instruction. This level of importance shows that while the College Board emphasizes argumentation, the instructors place high value on the use of different writing genres within their classrooms. The second category assesses items two and three, which are particularly important to the writing process: teacher and peer comments and feedback. The high school instructors surveyed place higher value on teacher comments than peer comments. They feel that peer comments are only "somewhat important" while teacher comments are "important." College instructors place almost equal value on teacher and peer comments; both are valued as "important" on the Likert scale. If these courses are to be the same, or count for the same credit, then peer comments should be just as important as teacher comments because the audience is the student's peers, not just the teacher assigning the grade.

Continuing on to items four through seven, there is a bit of a switch with the level of importance placed on imitation of writing techniques from students' readings. High school teachers feel that this is important and college instructors only deem it as somewhat important. This difference shows that in high school students are expected to imitate writers, while in college they are expected to use their own writing styles for the various assignments. The next three items, broken down into different writing genres (analytical, expository, and argumentation) show that high school instructors place equal importance on these different genres, where college instructors place higher importance on expository and argumentative writings. This difference in value shows that college instructors are preparing students more for writing across the disciplines and not just for their writing courses. It is agreed upon that "every

teacher should teach writing," but "the American Education system has placed the responsibility for teaching writing outside the disciplines, including, to a large extent, the discipline of "English" or literary study" (Russell 152). Since English instructors are expected to teach students to write across the disciplines, it has become commonplace. There obviously cannot be drastic differences in value placed on skills or curricular requirements and the next two items show this to be true. Nonfiction texts are of more importance than fictional texts for both instructors. This similarity shows that students are expected to read more nonfiction because that relates more to what they will be writing; students do not write fiction in an FYC course, so why should they necessarily read fiction? It does have its place and it's not that it isn't valued at all, but is only "somewhat important" while nonfiction is "important." Next, as important as it is for students to be able to interpret nonfiction texts—and visuals are nonfiction texts—neither instructor places substantial importance on the use of visuals in their classroom.

Moreover, as I have mentioned before, research skills (items eleven through thirteen) are important for students as they enter college. I mentioned in the introduction that there are AP teachers who do not value research because it "simply doesn't fit into the curriculum," but this data shows that high school instructors and college instructors place equal value on the importance of research skills. Whether these skills are implemented will be determined later, but they both highly value those skills. The last category (items fourteen through twenty-three) discusses a lot of information, so it is only important to point out the major differences. There are four items that have different values placed on them and they are all dealing with local issues rather than global ones. These are developing vocabulary, varying sentence structure, establishing and maintaining voice, and emphasis through diction and sentence structure. Since college instructors only place value as "somewhat important" on these skills shows that college

instructors tend to focus more on the paper as a whole instead of pointing out every grammatical error a student makes. What comes first is the development of ideas and if the development of ideas is there, then the grammatical errors don't seem as glaring. There are, of course, students who struggle with grammar and mechanics and that can take away from the overall message of a piece of writing, but most of the time the grammatical errors students make are not that glaring. Moreover, according to Williams, "if we read any text the way we read freshman essays, we will find many of the same kind of errors we routinely expect to find and therefore do find" and what he suggests is that if instructors read student essays "unreflexively [and] make the ordinary kind of contract with those texts that we make with other kinds of texts, then we could find many fewer errors" (Williams 420). In other words, the focus on student revision should be on the paper as a whole, or the global aspects of the paper, instead of sentence level errors. This is where there is a strong disparity in what constitutes revision.

Digging through this data, it may not seem like they are, statistically, very different outcomes, and that is what Holifield-Scott determined. However, the numbers indicate different levels of importance. Finding something "somewhat important" rather than "important" may not come out to a statistically different number, but statistics cannot determine personal value placement. The scores discussed are mean scores; the average of all respondents. Since these values are the mean scores, it shows that, even though the lower scores in the two range equal "somewhat important," there have to be quite a few instructors who feel it is "unimportant" to get the average of the surveys to be that low. Placing value on a requirement does not necessarily mean that the instructor will implement that particular requirement, either. In order to determine the level of implementation, I will discuss the numerical values of each item discussed previously, but now it will be the level of implementation.

Each item has been laid out in detail in the value placement section, so I will not go into the details of each item and the mean score for each[9]. The values placed on the curricular requirements show how the instructors *feel* about each of these items, but to what level do they implement them? For some of these items and categories there is a drastic shift in numerical values. While high school instructors highly value teacher and peer feedback and comments while working through drafts, the level of implementation dropped to "occasionally implement." Feedback from teachers and peers is important to the writing process, since the students should be tailoring to their audience and their audience includes their peers. This is a drastic decrease from value to implementation. This could correlate to the lack of drafting and revising in the classroom, which is an important part of the writing process. College instructors often implement these feedback strategies in the classroom. If each of these courses is supposed to be equivalent, then these numbers should be equal. According to Kennedy and Howard, "writing scholars attend to collaborative contributions to peer review—collaborative contributions to individually authored texts" and peer review has been "a staple of writing pedagogy for nearly half a century" (Kennedy & Howard 38). If peer review has been a staple in writing courses for over fifty years, then any course equivalent to an FYC course should include such work.

Items four through seven deal with imitation of writers and texts students read. These scores, again, are not statistically much different, but if we look at how the averages of these numbers come about, it is clear that there are more high school instructors that implement this than college instructors. For a score to be close to "often implement" there have to be more instructors that chose often or frequently implement. Conversely, for a score to be at the lower end of the "occasionally implement" range, more instructors would have to be choosing "never

[9] To see the numerical values placed on each item, refer to Appendix B.

implement" or "no awareness." Students imitating writers to develop their own skills isn't a bad instructional strategy. In fact, high school students probably need guidance of that nature to give them a base from which to start. Moreover, college instructors often place importance on the act of imitation, especially the imitation of scholarly articles. This is a good way for students to learn how to write in the academy, but Sheridan Blau disagrees. He states that "the formal writing assignments that ask for parodic versions of academic discourse are more alienating than inviting," which leads students to feel more outside of the academy than being a part of the academy (Blau 30). Most academics do, in fact, imitate other academics' writing to try to improve their writing skills, but asking students to do so before they have an understanding of how to write for their particular academic audience can be discouraging. So, if high school instructors are focusing more on imitation and college instructors are focusing more on getting students to understand the academic conversation, the gap in student writing abilities is significant if exempting from an FYC course.

The next big difference comes in the category on research skills and researched arguments. For both items eleven and twelve, college instructors implement more course work teaching students about sources, evaluating, and citing and they also implement a research paper that has students develop an argument of their own. Since writing beyond FYC is research intensive, it is important that students know how to find sources, how to evaluate sources, and how to find information on the proper ways to cite those resources. If students in AP are not given these skills and they exempt out of FYC, they are not getting the necessary skills they need to do appropriate research in higher classes and beyond. They have no course that orients them to the research skills for college level writing. This difference in implementation supports my mention, in Chapter one, of there "simply not being enough time" to teach the research paper in

AP. How can there not be enough time? Teachers can work this into their classes while teaching other things concurrently. While there is data that shows that AP does not implement the same skills as FYC, there are also points where the data doesn't change much between the two. The last nine categories, dealing with feedback given to students and grammatical and mechanical issues, show that this is a place where AP and FYC overlap. There are some small differences in the level of implementation, but overall it is safe to say that these are equal in interpretation.

I cannot say that AP and FYC do not overlap at all, because I would be remiss if I made such a claim, but it is clear that within this study, there are more places that they don't overlap than places where they do. Since this study was done with AP readers, these are AP teachers from all over the world. This is a good cross-section of the AP classroom because the readers are so diverse. However, as Holifield-Scott notes, there can be a slight bias with this population. These teachers hold more stake in the skills set forth by the College Board because they read the essays. They know what is expected on the AP exam. This could also correlate to high school teachers "teaching to the test," but it is probably also safe to assume that these teachers will implement and value the skills the College Board outlines because of the stake they have in the program. These teachers believe that these courses are equivalent and will do their best to make them as equivalent as they possibly can. That isn't to say, though, that the most important skills—research and the like—are being taught in high schools; this study shows that the high school teachers place higher value on those skills than the numerical value associated with their levels of implementation. Based on that information, it is becoming increasingly evident that AP students should not be exempt from a course that orients them to the necessary writing skills for the academy, because they are not getting that information in their AP courses.

The second study that is relevant to this discussion deals with students' reactions toward the comparability of their AP course and FYC. I have spent a lot of time talking about what happens in the classroom in AP and FYC, but the students' perspectives are also just as important. Whitley and Paulsen specifically surveyed students at BYU because this school has a "large group of students who are required to take FYC, despite their AP success" (Whitley & Paulsen 90). This group of students have committed to graduating with honors, so they are quite different than students who take the required, non-honors FYC course. These students were successful on the AP exam and achieved scores to exempt from the non-honors course, but the honors program at BYU requires them to take honors composition. In order to determine students' experience with FYC and its comparability to AP, Whitley and Paulsen surveyed the students after they finished the honors composition course. Furthermore, they surveyed the teachers in order to get their perspective on "what the students brought with them to the course as well as what they gained from it" (Whitley & Paulsen 91). The course that these students are required to take "focuses primarily on teaching students to think and read critically and to write academic discourse to prepare them for writing assignments they will encounter in later courses" (Whitley & Paulsen 92). This is exactly what the FYC courses I described in Chapter one focus on, also. This course expects the same out of these AP students that FYC expects, but they are expected to already have an understanding of the language and how to use it. In other words, this is by no means a remedial course.

In the survey, students were asked to assess the extent to which their high school and honors FYC instructor emphasized elements or steps of writing (Whitely & Paulsen 97). These elements or steps of writing are rhetoric, process, structure, and library. These broad categories are then broken into several smaller sections that each student will assess. For example, rhetoric

includes writing for a specific audience, purpose, and voice. The survey ranges from "little or no emphasis" to "very strong;" a scale of five. These students, again, were asked to assess the same categories for both classes. They also had the same scale and another survey to assess the emphasis of different types of writing: timed essays (five-paragraphs or so), analysis of reading, narratives, personal essays, descriptions, argumentative papers, and research papers (Whitley & Paulsen 104). Above and beyond the survey, students were also given 5 questions about the honors program and its requirement for students to take a writing course. The results of the survey and free response questions will be discussed in detail, separately by individual courses (high school and honors).

To begin, I will discuss the high school courses. The first category for the survey deals with elements of rhetoric, specifically, writing for a specified audience, purpose, and voice. The elements of rhetoric, based on the results, are emphasized often in the high school classroom. Based on the students' answers to the survey, their high school classrooms moderately emphasized tailoring writing to a specific audience. This is an important factor in writing, so naturally, teachers would emphasize writing for an appropriate audience. The particular audience that students were expected to write toward is unclear (academic, informal, etc.), but understanding how to tailor to an audience is important nonetheless. Moreover, students indicated that their high school courses emphasized writing for a specific purpose very strongly. Since this is one of the basic levels of writing (writing for a purpose) it should be something that is emphasized in high school because there can be no writing taking place if there is no purpose for writing. The last part of rhetorical elements is voice. Voice is important to writing and has been for over half a century. The idea of having an individual voice in writing stems from the Dartmouth Conference in 1966. Peter Elbow, according to Harris "speaks for most of the

theorists and textbook authors who have used the term after Dartmouth" when he states that voice "comes from *inside* a writer and makes her work some how more real" (Harris 34 original emphasis). Even in the Virginia state standards of learning, there is a standard that emphasizes voice. According to the Virginia Department of Education, students in eleventh grade focus on persuasive writing, but standard 11.6e states "students will adapt content, vocabulary, voice, and tone to audience, purpose, and situation" (Virginia SOLs 18). The College Board even mentions in their AP standards that students should have control of their voice. Since voice is important to developing writing that is your own, students indicated that this was emphasized very strongly in their high school courses. As it stands right now, the high school courses these students took clearly emphasize rhetorical elements in students' writings, albeit the most obvious of rhetorical elements, but rhetorical elements nonetheless. The next category is where concerns arise in comparability.

The next major category is process writing. From Chapter one, it is evident that writing process is important in the FYC classroom. What I have also discovered from research is that writing process is deemphasized in the high school classroom because of lack of time that is needed for these steps. With respects to the subcategories in this survey, each point (prewriting, drafting, revising, peer review/workshopping) is emphasized moderately to more than moderately according to the results. However, the number of students that count as the majority for each section is no more than 39% of students surveyed. This is less than half of the students and shows that while the writing process is important, the step that is emphasized the most is revision, in the high school classroom (38.5% of students surveyed). The percentage of students who indicated revision was emphasized in their high school classroom isn't enough to warrant the claim of the writing process being important. The same percentage of students, overall, stated

that their high school courses emphasized revision little or none to moderately. It isn't clear whether students are given in-class time to revise, or if they are expected to revise on their own time, but revision is something that the majority of students have experience with. What is troubling about these results, though, is that they are bottom heavy. By bottom heavy, I mean that these results are heavy on the bottom end of the survey scale. Most students indicated that their instructors emphasized the writing process little or none to moderately. This is troubling because it indicates that, again, high school AP teachers do not emphasize the writing process in their classroom. The implications of this will become evident when discussing the results from the honors FYC course.

The third category is centered on structure. This category deals with the structure of the essay; from organization to grammar. The results of this particular section aren't surprising. The majority of students indicated that their high school teachers emphasized these elements moderately to very strongly. This is the opposite of the results on process. These results are more top heavy and that indicates that high school teachers are emphasizing the different structural issues in their classroom. This is important because college instructors, generally, expect students to have a basic understanding of organization, thesis, transitions, etc. before they come into their classes. However, if students are only receiving a basic understanding of these (and they are exempt from FYC), they are not going to be given the appropriate instruction to develop those skills further. They will enter into higher level courses with the basics of organization and will not be given the skills that are necessary for developing those skills on their own.

The last category is based on library research. Research is important to college level writing and students will be expected to do research throughout their college career and beyond. However, from my previous discussion in Chapter one and much of the research I have already

discussed, it appears that high school AP courses do not focus much on research. The results from Whitley and Paulsen's study show that students are given a strong understanding of how to avoid plagiarism, but when it comes to library research and documenting sources, these results tend to be more bottom heavy. When it comes to library research, over 60% of the results were moderate to little or none. Students are not being taught how to effectively research using resources available to them. Obviously, colleges have more available for students to access than most high schools, but high school teachers can still give students the necessary research skills to find and use credible sources in their writing. Whether this is a time issue in the classroom, or teachers are "teaching to the test" cannot be determined from this data, but it is clear that teachers are not putting enough emphasis on research and for this course to be equivalent to FYC, research should be an important focus.

Looking at the data thus far, it is hard to understand the comparability of these courses based on students' feelings. However, if we take the same results for the honors course and compare them with the results form the high school course, the disparities will become evident. Since the categories have been discussed already, I will compare the results for each with the results already given. There are a few places where there is overlap and that is expected. I cannot justifiably argue that these courses are drastically dissimilar, but instead, the argument can be made that the places of overlap are not sufficient for these courses to be considered comparable.

Beginning with rhetorical elements, this is one of the places where these courses do overlap. For both high school and the honors course, the numbers come out pretty equally. The high school courses tend to emphasize purpose more than writing for a specific audience or purpose, but the results are close enough to say that these two areas are comparable. Like I stated before, these are the most basic elements of rhetoric and students should have an understanding

of them before coming to college. However, that doesn't mean that college instructors don't emphasize these same skills. From this study it is apparent that both high school and college instructors place considerable emphasis on rhetorical elements in students' writing.

Another area where there is a considerable amount of overlap is the structure category. In the high school classroom, there is heavy emphasis on making sure essays are structurally sound. This is comparable to the honors FYC in the sense that in order for an essay to make an impact it needs to make sense and flow well. If it doesn't flow well, it isn't organized, lacks a thesis, etc., it will not make an impact on the reader. The most comparable area is thesis statements. This is the most important part of a paper because without a thesis, the reader cannot follow the points being made in the essay. Placing emphasis on the thesis statement should be used in every writing intensive course, not just in AP or FYC. The only slight discrepancy in this data is based on format. High school teachers don't emphasize format as much as FYC instructors. This probably has more to do with the fact that most high school essays are hand written and teachers cannot stress margins, double spacing, headings, etc. with handwritten work as much as they can with work produced with word processing software. Students in college are expected to turn in typed essays, so formatting is emphasized more because there is more control over these modes.

Although there is overlap in the area of rhetoric and structure, the areas that don't overlap are the most important to college level writing. As discussed before, there is a considerable amount of emphasis placed on revision in the high school classrooms, but the results are still very bottom heavy for the process category. Conversely, the college honors course is extremely top heavy with the results on process. The majority of the results (mostly 65-90% of students) note that their honors FYC instructor more than moderately or very strongly emphasized prewriting, drafting, revising, and peer review/workshops. The lowest results are for prewriting

and I can surmise, from my experience, that prewriting is not emphasized, or students don't see it as being emphasized as much because these are low-stakes, in-class writing assignments. The prewriting stages can also take the form of group work, or discussions between classmates. Generally, instructors don't have their students turn in their prewriting or have specific expectations for prewriting strategies. Moreover, students clearly show that revising and peer review are important to their college class. College instructors expect students to submit, or at least be responsible for creating, a rough draft (or first draft, if you wish) of their writing. They also expect students to review one another's work because they are part of the audience to which they are writing. Since these are such important parts to producing well-written and well-developed pieces of writing, above and beyond FYC, the strong emphasis in the college classroom is evident.

With more emphasis put on the writing process in the college classroom, that leads to the last section of the survey which deals with library research. As with the writing process, the results show that this is emphasized more in the college classroom. High school classrooms do not emphasize the use of research, but more often emphasize the skills to avoid plagiarism and the college classroom has equal results for all three areas. Just over half of the students noted that each area (library research, documenting sources, and avoiding plagiarism) was emphasized very strongly in their honors course. Similar to the process section, most of the results (around 80% of students) indicate more than moderate or very strong emphasis in all three categories. This percentage is almost the exact opposite of the high school classroom. Research in the college setting (and beyond) is of great importance. Students are expected to know how to find sources, determine their credibility, and use those sources appropriately for various projects. In order for

these courses to be comparable enough to warrant exemption, students need to be able to navigate research databases and library catalogues effectively.

Holifield-Scott's and Whitley and Paulsen's studies focus on implementation of AP curricular requirements and students' perceptions of comparability, but that isn't necessarily the only important factor to think about. What happens when we take a look at how students achieve on other college entrance exams, such as the ACT? Does AP have an impact on how students do on these tests? If there is an impact, what does this mean for the AP program and its ability to prepare students for college? This is what Stoker tries to determine in her study. Stoker also looks at the effect AP has on students' GPA, support for college (help with FAFSA, guidance with the application process, etc.), and four-year college enrollment. What makes her study unique is that this is done in an inner-city school district and looks at minority students instead of the majority of AP students, who are Caucasian students.

There are several factors, besides AP, that colleges take into consideration when reviewing a student's application materials. Since just taking the AP exam isn't enough for students to apply to a college, it is necessary to look at the effect these AP classes have on college entrance exams. While entrance exams are only a factor, students' high school GPAs are important as well. Most AP courses are weighted and will increase a student's GPA if they take these courses, giving them the opportunity to achieve higher than the typical 4.0 GPA. Stoker looks at both the weighted and unweighted GPAs of students taking AP courses. Her study focuses on several AP courses, but I will only discuss the results she found from the AP English course.

In order to better understand the unique nature of Stoker's study, it is important to discuss the demographics of inner-city, low income students. Generally, there is an achievement gap

with reference to minority students. This could be because of "insufficient access to college preparatory courses and lack of early and high-quality college counseling" (Stoker 6). Furthermore, these students are more likely to graduate high school without the minimal requirements for admittance to a four-year college (Stoker 6). In order to determine if AP helps with these issues, Stoker studied an inner-city school district and focused the results of her study on the minority students taking AP courses. The students chosen for this study graduated from a CPS high school in the 2003-04 and 2006-07 school years, cannot be enrolled in a special education program, and must have been enrolled in a CPS high school for grades ten through twelve (Stoker 53). The majority of the students attending these schools and included in the study are African American or Latino.

The first research question Stoker asks deals with whether AP courses improve high school students' ACT test scores. This question is broken down into three subsections, but only one is of importance to this argument. That question is "Do urban high school students who take an AP English course earn higher scores on the ACT English test than students who do not?" (Stoker 89). The district in question already has ACT scores lower than the national average, so it will be clear whether students taking AP have improved test scores (Stoker 90). CPS requires all of their students to take the ACT before the end of their junior year, so AP English was chosen as a subsection of the ACT evaluation because AP English is one of the few AP courses with material covered on the ACT that is offered to students during their junior year. Moreover, the two AP English courses have the largest number of students enrolled. In order to determine whether AP increased students' ACT English scores, their scores were compared with non-AP students. Based on Stoker's data, there are "no significant differences in ACT English scores between CPS graduates who took AP English during their junior year and those who did not at

either the subgroup or overall level" (Stoker 93). The scores only varied a few decimal points for each subgroup and overall. There are a few reasons Stoker discusses as to why, one of which I agree with. Stoker states, "if AP English really is preparing students for college, one would expect that CPS graduates who took AP English would perform significantly better on the ACT English test than students who did not" (94). What is interesting about this is that AP is supposed to teach students to write at a deeper level and the ACT English has two sections, one writing and one multiple choice. It isn't clear whether Stoker is looking at the multiple choice section or both. Since she refers to English instead of writing, it is safe to assume that it is only based on the multiple choice section. Her rationale about the low scores is that "the ACT English test focuses on more the grammatical and mechanical practices of English, which are not always covered in the more literature- and essay-based AP English courses" (Stoker 94). It would have been more prudent of her to look at the writing scores and the English scores together.

Since Stoker only looked at the multiple choice English test and what I am trying to prove is that the writing skills of students aren't up to the level necessary to exempt from all introductory or orientation courses to writing in the academy, it is hard for me to argue effectively with her data. What I can determine is that minority, low-income, inner-city students do not have a strong handle on the grammar and mechanics of writing and that can be detrimental to students when entering into higher college courses. Instructors at higher levels do not teach students how to correct sentence-level errors in their papers because they expect students to have a handle on those skills, much of which can be learned in FYC. Moreover, these instructors could have several hundred students and several hundred papers and they don't have time to meet one-on-one with each one of their students. FYC instructors have smaller classes and have the opportunity to meet with students one-on-one and help them work on these skills so

they have a stronger skill set to proceed to higher courses. From Holifield-Scott's study it was determined that AP instructors seldom implement feedback during the revision process, so that could affect the teaching and student understanding of how to correct sentence-level errors in their writings. This is just one aspect of college acceptance and while having a strong command of writing mechanics and grammar is important, students have to be accepted into a college first for that to even be a factor.

The next research question pertinent to the discussion deals with weighted and unweighted GPAs. Students who take AP courses are generally given higher grade points for grades received in those classes. For example, in a typical high school course, an A is worth 4 grade points, a B is worth 3 grade points, and so on; in an AP course, an A is worth 5 grade points, a B is worth 3 grade points, and a C is worth 2 grade points. This leads to students in AP courses having the ability to achieve higher than a 4.0 GPA. Grade point averages are an important factor in college admissions decisions. In Stoker's study, she compares the weighted GPA of students taking AP courses with students who are not enrolled in an AP course. She also takes the unweighted GPA of AP students and compares that with students not enrolled in an AP course. However, the school district that Stoker uses in her study does use a different grade point system than other high schools. Taking this into consideration, it is obvious that an AP student would achieve a higher GPA than students who do not take AP because a student enrolled in an AP course "need only earn a 'C' to achieve the same number of grade points as an 'A' student in a regular course" (Stoker 109). Since the grade point system allows for students to achieve higher GPAs for lower grades, it is important to also look at the difference in unweighted GPAs. What Stoker discovered is "at best, [AP students] seem to earn similar course grades, while at worst, they seem to earn somewhat lower course grades" (Stoker 112). What does this mean for

students who are planning to enroll in college? Overall, it would appear that even though these students are achieving similar grades to their non-AP counterparts, they have a better chance at gaining admission to college because they are enrolled in a more rigorous course. Furthermore, Stoker also considered the support students received from teachers/counselors, parents, friends and/or other school staff with respect to college enrollment and discovered that AP students are not "more likely to enroll in four-year colleges because they receive greater amounts of support for college" (Stoker 126). Overall, these students may achieve higher GPAs and have a better chance at enrolling in college, but in this particular district that isn't necessarily happening and that is more than likely something that is happening in more districts than this one.

Since there is such a lack of research out there on the effects of AP on urban, low-income students' college outcomes, Stoker's dissertation and research study starts to fill some of those gaps. If AP is supposed to prepare students for college and allows them the opportunity to exempt out of introductory courses, then the advent of AP in low-income, urban schools should result in more of those students enrolling in and succeeding in college. It is obvious that these students are more marketable than their non-AP counterparts because they are taking more rigorous courses in high school and admissions officers look at high school course work when making admissions decisions. Several colleges use AP as a "signaling device…that the student is indeed qualified for admission" (Stoker 195). However, it also needs to be taken into consideration that these students, while not achieving the best grades, are still more likely to apply to more colleges and complete the FAFSA (Stoker 180). Since there isn't a great deal of research out there about low-income, urban AP students, it is hard to determine whether these results are even generalizable across all low-income schools. I cannot, justifiably, say that AP helps these students enter into college, or even succeed while in college, but it is safe to say that

AP does help them in ways that non-AP classes don't. AP does help minority students learn and achieve better and can help to reduce the minority achievement gap, but this does not mean that there is comparability between AP and FYC.

While my argument is that AP does not prepare students enough to exempt from, but rather place into a higher introductory writing course, it is important to look at Stoker's work for a number of reasons. First, her study works with a group of students that is drastically underrepresented in most studies dealing with AP students. Looking at another group makes this discussion more generalizable to the overall student populations taking AP courses. Second, her study shows that there are, indeed, districts where students are not necessarily receiving their AP instruction from highly qualified teachers. Of course, there are very qualified teachers who teach in low-income districts because that is what they love to do, but a lot of these districts don't have the funds to hire those qualified teachers. Last, her study makes it clear that more work needs to be done with low-income students in order to see the effects of AP overall. It is obvious that students who attend the more affluent districts will have a better support system at home and that is beneficial to their success in AP and beyond, but the lower-income students do not have those same resources available to them at home. This lack of resources makes it harder for these students to achieve to the best of their ability. Since Stoker's study doesn't follow these students as they go through college, or even through their first year, it is hard to make a connection with whether these students will be successful, but looking at their test results and their GPAs, it is evident that they are not achieving higher than their non-AP counterparts.

Moreover, Stoker's study doesn't discuss the comparability of AP and FYC, which is what my argument is based upon, but her study does begin to spark some interesting ideas. Her study shows that AP does, in fact, help low-income, minority students gain admission to college,

which is fantastic because many of these students, without the help of AP, would not have the opportunity to go to college. This also makes the exemption plan for success on the AP exam even more complicated. Since these lower income, minority students may not be getting the best instruction from their AP teachers, it is more likely that these teachers are "teaching to the test." While that cannot be proven, it can be surmised. From my experience as an AP teacher in a low-income area, I can attest to that. With teachers focusing on skills to achieve on the AP exam, students in these districts are more likely, if exempt from FYC, to lack the skills for high level college writing. This creates more of a cause for the inception of an advanced writing course that students should be required to take if they achieve qualifying scores on the AP exam.

Based on these three studies, it is clear that there isn't enough overlap with FYC and college composition for them to be considered the same course. Holifield-Scott's data shows that there is more implementation of the College Board's standards in college courses than in AP courses. While AP teachers may highly value the standards set by the College Board, the level of implementation does not equal their value. Since her study focuses on AP readers, her results are easily generalizable to the population of instructors; however, there is the implication that they have more stock invested in the AP standards because they are AP readers. Moreover, that same implication can indicate that these readers are more inclined to teach the necessary skills for students to achieve on the test rather than skills that will last through students' lifetimes. The implementation of these skills can be assessed from an outsider's view, but what the students perceive is just as important. Whitley and Paulsen's study shows that students perceive their college courses to implement more skills in writing than their high school AP courses. Overall, these students feel that their college course implements the process and research portions of writing more than their AP courses did. Stoker's study focuses more on the ability of students,

specifically low-income, urban students, to enroll in college if they take AP. Her results show that, while their GPAs may be higher due to weighted grades, their grades are still similar to those of students in non-AP courses. Moreover, her results prove that AP doesn't necessarily help students enroll in college.

While it doesn't seem like AP is much different from FYC based on these studies, I argue that it is different enough to warrant placement into a higher level course rather than exemption. Since AP courses focus more on how to get students to write grammatically and structurally correct, the emphasis isn't placed enough on process and research. Without the necessary skills to work through the writing process, students will not be able to produce well-written and well-developed papers, because thoughts take time to develop. Furthermore, students should have a handle on grammar and mechanics before entering college, so the de-emphasis of that in the college setting is understandable. While I interpret the information from these studies quite differently from the authors, I still maintain that AP courses do not prepare students adequately for exemption. Of course, there are those few students who have the skills necessary to move past FYC, but the majority of incoming college students need introductory instruction to the academy.

Conclusion

When it comes to trying to discover whether AP and FYC are comparable, a daunting task lies ahead. What is most important is trying to figure out whether students who are successful on the AP exam should be allowed to be exempt from any FYC courses they may be required to take otherwise. I have laid out the information in the previous two chapters in discussing the parameters of the AP program, several colleges and universities, and those of the WPA outcomes for FYC. I also discussed three dissertations and studies that were conducted on the AP program, specifically, the writing portion of the AP course. While I would like to definitively say that the AP program is not comparable enough to FYC to warrant students' exemption from FYC, I cannot, justifiably, make such a definitive claim. I can, however, say from my research that there isn't quite enough overlap between the expectations of AP and the outcomes of several colleges and universities and the WPA to justify students being able to be exempt from a course at the university level that orients them to college-level writing expectations.

Some universities and colleges, like Mary Baldwin College, only have one writing course students are required to take, but many universities, like Radford University and Virginia Tech, have two or more. Since the AP exam allows students to be exempt from at least one course, or three credit hours, students at schools like MBC will exempt from any orientation to college-level writing. It is possible, at Virginia Tech, that students can also exempt from all writing courses with success on both AP exams (English Language and Composition and English Literature and Composition), but since I am only focusing on the APELC course, students would not exempt out of all writing courses with success on that exam alone. Exempting from courses

that orient students to college-level writing has it positives, such as saving time and money, but the negatives greatly outweigh those positives.

Since the AP course focuses on one type of writing, students are usually oriented to argument most frequently, which is only one aspect of college-level writing. Sure, students are going to write argumentative papers in college, but that is not the only type of writing they will do. Students are expected to write in different genres at the college level. Being able to argue well is beneficial to students, but they need to also have the skills to be rhetorically aware and responding to the rhetorical situation. If they are only oriented to writing in one genre, they are not given the skills to assess the rhetorical situation. Obviously, it is important to understand that beginning with argument is logical and there will always be students who will take their argument skills and manipulate them to work for other genres, but they are few. Most of the time, students will focus on this type of writing and it becomes hard to stray from something they have been learning for years. In order for AP and FYC to be equivalent, students should be given the skills to assess the rhetorical situation, rather than focusing on one genre.

Additionally, AP does not have a strong background of including research-based papers in their courses. From Holifield-Scott's study, it can be determined that, while AP teachers highly value research in the classroom, they don't implement it often. The synthesis essay asks students to synthesize information from sources, but the students do not have to do the research to find those sources, it is already done for them. Since the exam doesn't expect students to research, it is easier for teachers to use that as another reason, besides not having enough time, for not having a research project or research unit in their courses. However, it is evident from Holifield-Scott's study that college instructors both highly value and implement research in the classroom. If these courses are to be comparable, the level of implementation should be close to

equal, but unfortunately it is not. High school teachers could still teach the same skills needed for the synthesis essay while teaching a research project and they would have the time necessary to devote to teaching research skills. This would make these two courses more comparable.

Students who are successful on the AP exam should not have to take the required FYC course; that I can get on board with. What I cannot agree with is allowing students to be exempt from an advanced, non-honors FYC course that orients them to college-level writing. Students always have the option of enrolling in the honors program at their selected university, but not all students want to take that route. Instead of only having the option of taking honors courses, which would require students to take an FYC course similar to the course discussed in Whitley and Paulsen's study, students should be given the option of taking a course that is similar to the required FYC course for all incoming freshmen, but the curriculum would be advanced. This would give these students the opportunity to have the challenge they wouldn't receive in the required FYC course and allow them to get the necessary skills for college-level writing. Getting these skills will greatly help these students later in their college career and in their professional lives because they will know how to improve their writing skills on their own. It is important to understand that there is no end point for writing improvement. No one is ever truly done learning all there is to know about writing and no one is every truly done improving their writing, but in order to do so the writer needs the skills to do so.

Even though there are limitations to adding another course or requiring students to take a course they would otherwise not have to take, I cannot advocate for students who are successful on the exam to be exempt from, at least, an advanced writing course. The idea of students not being able to earn college credit for their success on the exam does diminish the appeal of AP. Students take AP because they want to shorten their time in college and save some money in the

process. This makes complete logical sense. College degrees are expensive, so why not cut costs? Saving money is always ideal, but students will not understand the purpose of needing a college-level writing course until it is too late. This can also cause problems for the departments that fund FYC courses. Adding an advanced course means there need to be instructors to teach those courses. This can be almost impossible for some schools because they don't have the funding to hire more professors and don't have the capacity to overload the current professors' course load.

AP may have its flaws and I do think that students who achieve a qualifying score on the AP exam should have to take an advanced course in writing before entering into their major classes, but that isn't to say that FYC doesn't have its flaws, either. As technology becomes increasingly important in the writing process and the lives of our students, FYC has been working to adapt. Sometimes the adaptation is slow moving because instructors who have been teaching FYC for years do not have the technological knowledge to teach the new technologies to their students. When presented with new technology, it is important to understand "where our students write, the tools they will be using to write, and the often uneven attitudes (and access) that our students may have with respect to these technologies" (Brooke 177). Students are exposed to writing technologies every day and instructors need to know what technologies students use and what they think of them. There are ways that instructors can incorporate these new technologies into their classes without having to learn every new technology out there, but even that can be a daunting task for some instructors. Furthermore, instructors are also given the task of teaching career specific writing, which can include these new technologies. Instructors shouldn't see these new technologies as a passing phase; instead, they should work "with technologies…in a mindful, reflective way" (Brooke 188). If instructors learn about the

technologies students use and how they use them, they can discover the usefulness of these new technologies and they will see that this is more than just a passing phase. As writing evolves (as it always does, we don't write in the same manner as was necessary at the advent of FYC), FYC has to evolve and it does even if it only evolves slowly. What is important is that research is driving the evolution of FYC and other writing courses forward and not holding it stagnant.

Trying to compare AP and FYC has presented me with a difficult realization. I have realized that there isn't enough research out there on AP in order to determine its comparability to FYC. Several studies have been done that focus on honors students, students who exempt from FYC based on their AP exam scores, and students who are required to take FYC. These studies look at the writings these students have done and compare them. There are also studies, like the ones discussed in Chapter two, which deal with instructors and their opinions. However, there isn't enough information out there to make a definitive decision on the comparability of these two courses. Since there isn't much information or research to make such a definitive claim it led me to thinking about what studies could be done to help understand the comparability of these courses.

In the future, I would like to be able to work with several high schools and universities that represent a similar demographic to those of the universities I discuss in Chapter one. I think taking a cross section of affluent, rural, and inner-city schools would help with understanding what happens in the classroom. Since most studies only rely on surveys and not so much on observations, I would like to try to do both. Working with the instructors for both courses, I think observing their courses and the types of assignments they expect their students to do would give a much broader depiction of what happens behind these closed doors. Obviously, one could argue that teachers would develop stronger lessons while being observed because they want to

give a good impression, but random observations could solve that problem. If I were to get a schedule of assignments and classes I could just show up randomly and have a more accurate picture of what they actually teach. Moreover, these observations would be supported with beginning and ending surveys for both instructors and students and a collection of student writing from the beginning and end of the observation period to determine what growth, if any, students received. This type of research would take a considerable amount of time, but I think it would give a better depiction of what happens in the AP and FYC classrooms.

A more effective research study would follow students from their 11th grade AP classrooms all the way through college graduation, but that would be a study that would take at least seven years to complete. That is a time commitment that most instructors and researchers are not willing to make, but I am sure there will come a time when someone will dedicate their time to doing such research. Every study has its flaws and I don't think there will ever be any research presented that will create a definite answer to the comparability of the courses. However, these studies could continue to open the lines of communication because high school instructors would have a better idea of what happens in the FYC classroom and vice versa. The lack of conversation is where the issue of instruction stems from. The conversation between the WPA and the College Board began in the 1990s, but to make it better, "college composition professionals can work with the AP English program to help improve the test" (Jolliffe 73). If college composition instructors are willing to acknowledge that AP has its flaws and help mend those flaws, that is one step in the direction of change. Being able to open the lines of communication with research and professional development would be a good beginning to understanding.

Overall, I have discovered that no one can definitively say whether AP students are not effectively prepared for college-level writing. The College Board takes strides to work with college instructors to ensure that AP courses have similar expectations for their students as FYC courses, but their work can only go so far. As writing evolves, so does FYC and so should AP, but AP standards haven't changed much in the last ten years or so. I would have liked to have proven that AP students are not truly prepared, but I can't. What I can suggest is that students be given an advanced writing course to take that is outside the honors college. Not all students want to make the commitment to graduating with honors, so having an advanced course outside the honors college would give all students the opportunity to be oriented to college-level writing. I also advocate for more professional development in writing to take place between college and high school instructors to help patch the holes they perceive. Change can only happen when these two parties work together to elicit the change. AP could, eventually, work to prepare students to be exempt from FYC, but where it is right now, it has quite a ways to go before that can happen.

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Appendix A

	Rhetorical Knowledge	Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing	Writing Process	Knowledge of conventions	Visual Literacy	Oral Presentation Skills	Writing in Electronic Environments
Radford University	X	X	X	X	-----	X	-----
Virginia Tech	X	X	X	-----	X	X	X
Mary Baldwin	-----	X	X	X	-----	-----	-----
Christopher Newport	X	X	X	X	-----	-----	-----
PHCC	X	X	X	X	-----	-----	-----

Appendix B

Item	High School--Value	College--Value		High School--Implementation	College--Implementation
1	3.68	3.29		3.44	3.38
2	3.42	3.56		2.89	3.5
3	2.89	3.05		2.73	3.36
4	3.15	2.67		2.92	2.51
5	3.54	2.58		3.39	3.15
6	3.49	2.94		3.2	2.89
7	3.8	3.41		3.39	3.44
8	3.77	3.09		3.64	3.21
9	2.61	2.37		2.56	2.11
10	2.89	2.61		2.64	2.43
11	3.49	3.63		2.85	3.58
12	3.49	3.43		2.71	3.36
13	3.32	3.42		3.02	3.67
14	3.25	3.33		3	3.24
15	3.28	3.37		3.15	3.57
16	3.34	3.24		2.97	3.32
17	3.2	2.65		3.05	2.74
18	3.17	2.9		2.86	2.92
19	3.44	3.34		3.14	3.17
20	3.28	3.2		3.12	3.14
21	3.37	3.14		3	2.92
22	3.28	2.89		2.94	2.85
23	3.35	2.92		3.08	3.06