

FP Assessment 2012

The “FP experiment”

Beginning in Fall term of 2011, the Freshman Preceptorial changed from its previous common format to a format in which several different courses were offered. Although the content areas addressed by each section would differ, the general course model and learning goals for FP would be the same for all classes.

1. The course should address a broad theme or topic, i.e., a “big question” explored from a range of perspectives. The aim of the course is NOT to introduce students to academic disciplines
2. The course must be Writing Intensive.
3. The course must be discussion- rather than lecture-based, teaching students the skills of listening and speaking.
4. The course must nurture critical thinking.
5. The course must address academic integrity through consideration of intellectual honesty and instruction in proper annotation.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. write a short essay that, with clarity and accuracy, presents a convincing argument or analysis;
2. contribute to class discussion, demonstrating careful listening to others as well as close reading of the assigned texts;
3. demonstrate habits of critical thinking in their contributions to class discussion as well as in their written work;
4. demonstrate an understanding of the meaning of "academic integrity" as it applies to academic work, including proper citation.

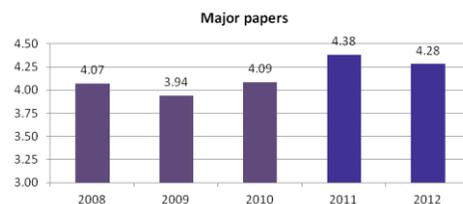
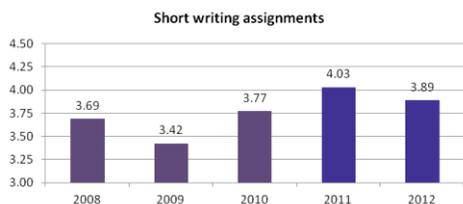
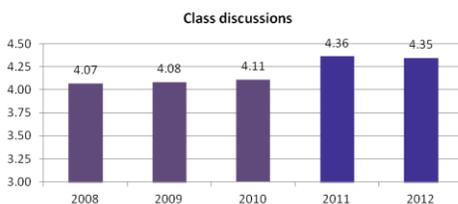
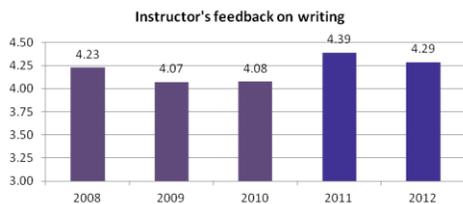
The assessment developed for Fall of 2011 followed this model and focused on: Academic integrity, writing, and the learning goals for the course. Wherever possible, the 2011 assessment mirrored previous years’ practice to allow direct comparison of the new FP with the common course format. As the college entered the second year of the “FP experiment”, the assessment plan for 2012 mirrored the assessments completed for FP 2011. This enables us to examine two years of data with regard to the FP experiment.

Five Year Comparisons

At the end of the term, FP students were asked to complete an in class evaluation of FP. The evaluation was completed in all sections of FP. The Fall 2012 evaluation utilized the evaluation developed for Fall of 2011. The 2011 survey combined the FP evaluation completed at the end of the term and an online survey about perceptions of writing instruction in FP from previous years. Any changes from the 2011 and the 2012 evaluation forms are indicated throughout the document.

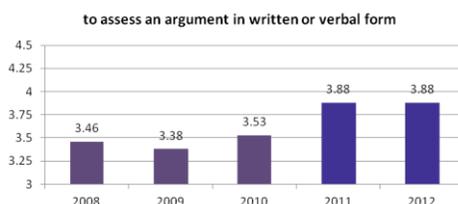
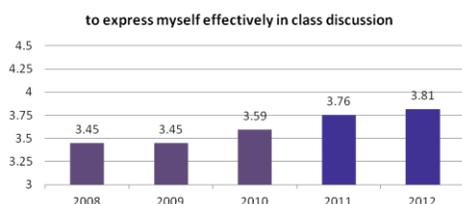
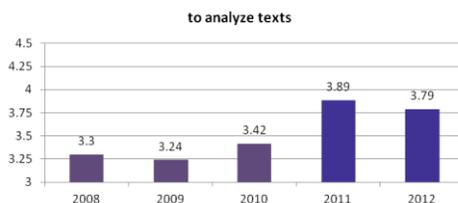
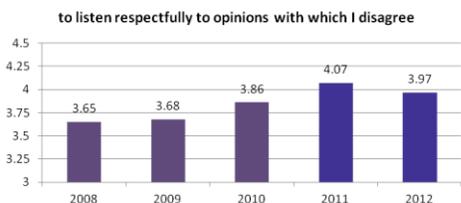
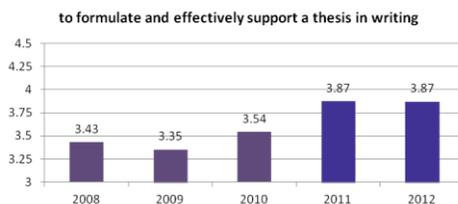
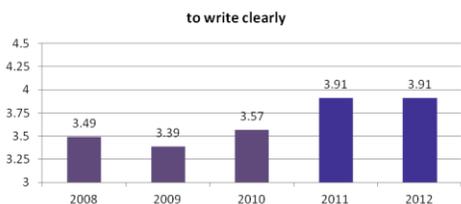
For 2012, 334 students of 385 students earning a grade other than “W” participated in the in class evaluation, for a response rate of 86.8%.

With one being low and five being high, students were asked to rate the value of the following components of FP. The mean responses for the past five years are reported here.

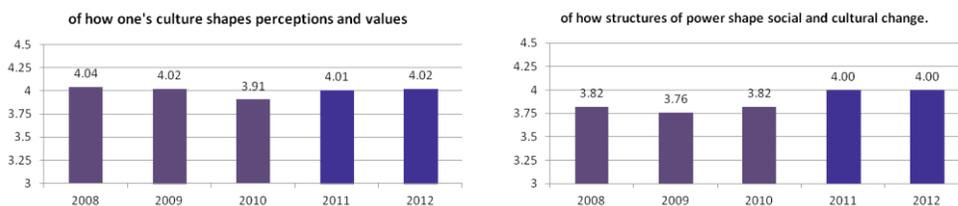


With one being “Strongly Disagree” and five being “Strongly Agree”, students were asked to rate the impact of FP on the following:

FP helped me to improve my ability...



Although the learning goals for the 2011 and 2012 FP did not explicitly include demonstrating an understanding of diversity, in order to compare the current format of FP with the previous common course format in this regard, two questions regarding diversity were included in the 2011 and 2012 surveys.



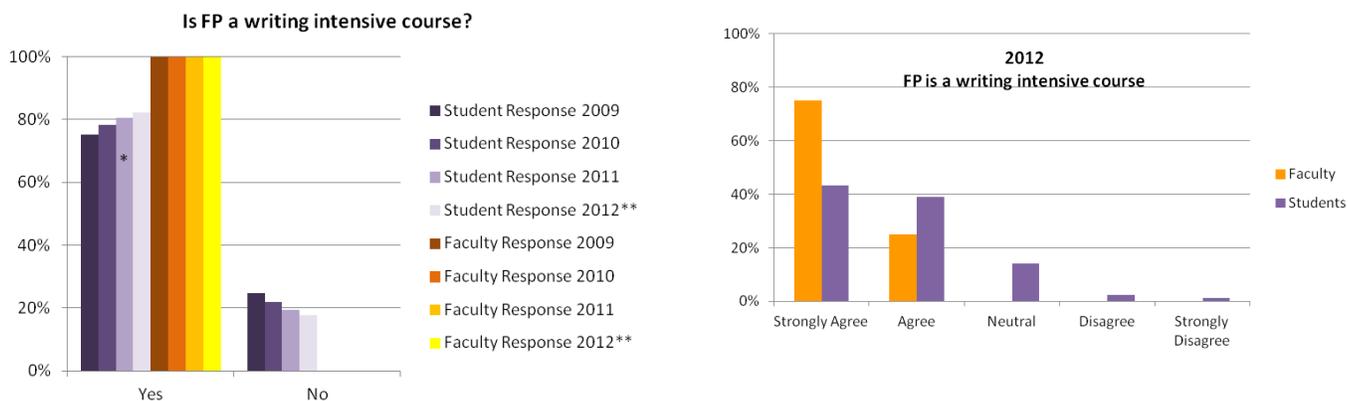
Instruction in Writing

Both students and faculty were asked a series of questions regarding writing instruction. Students completed the in class evaluation as described above. Faculty were asked to complete an online survey, found in Appendix 2. 16 of 20 faculty completed the survey, for a response rate of 80%. One additional faculty member responded to only three items. This faculty member's responses are included as appropriate.

The results below compare student and faculty responses for FP for 2009-2012, Student and faculty data for 2009 and 2010 were collected via online surveys during winter term. For 2009, 195 students (55%) and 18 faculty (82%) responded to the survey. For 2010, 202 students (54%) and 16 faculty (84%) completed the survey. For 2011, these questions were included in the in class course evaluation for students. 290 of 335 students completed the survey (87%) and 18 faculty (82%) completed the survey.

The item "Constructing arguments" was not included in the 2011 Student Evaluation.

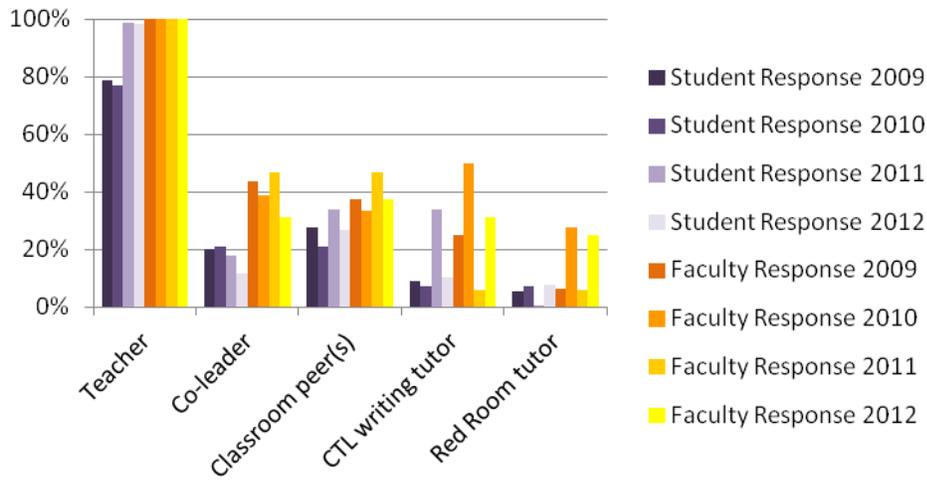
FP is a writing intensive course



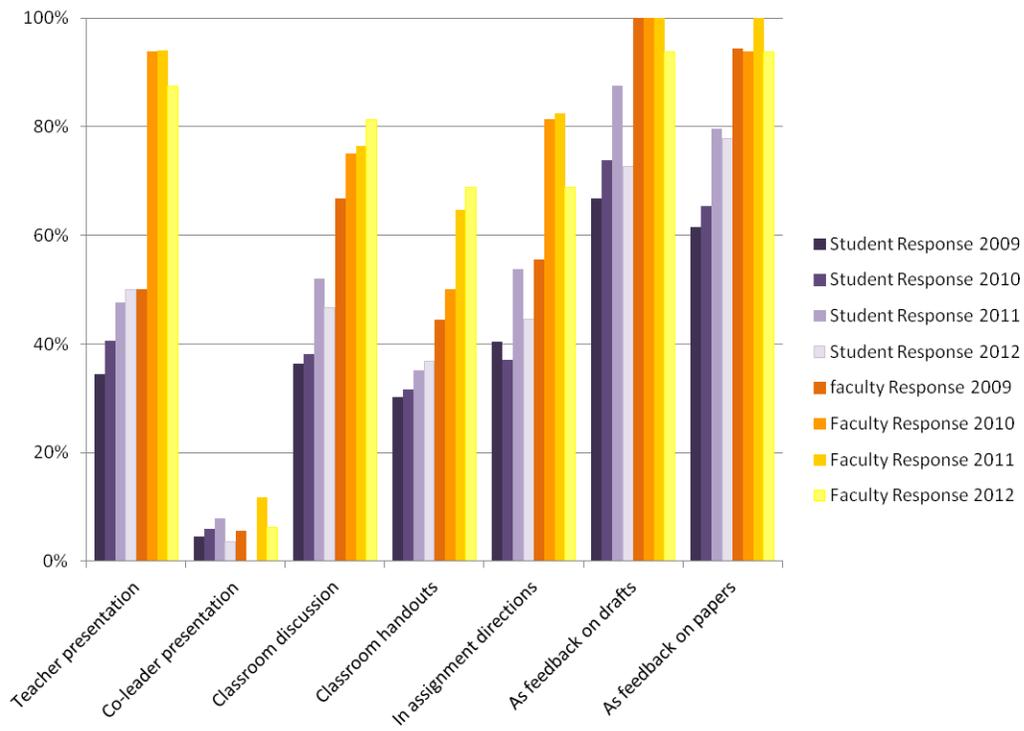
* For 2011, students responded on a 5 point scale, with 1=Strongly disagree, and 5=Strongly agree. The value for "yes" equals % responding "Agree" + % responding "Strongly Agree". The value for "no" = % responding "Neutral" + % responding "Disagree" + % responding "Strongly Disagree".

** For 2012, both faculty and students responded on a 5 point scale. The scale and value calculations were as described above.

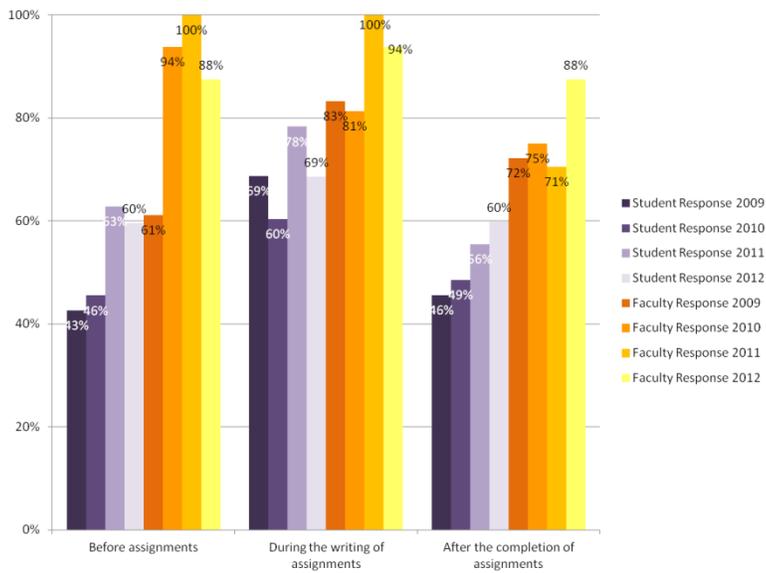
Who provided writing instruction?



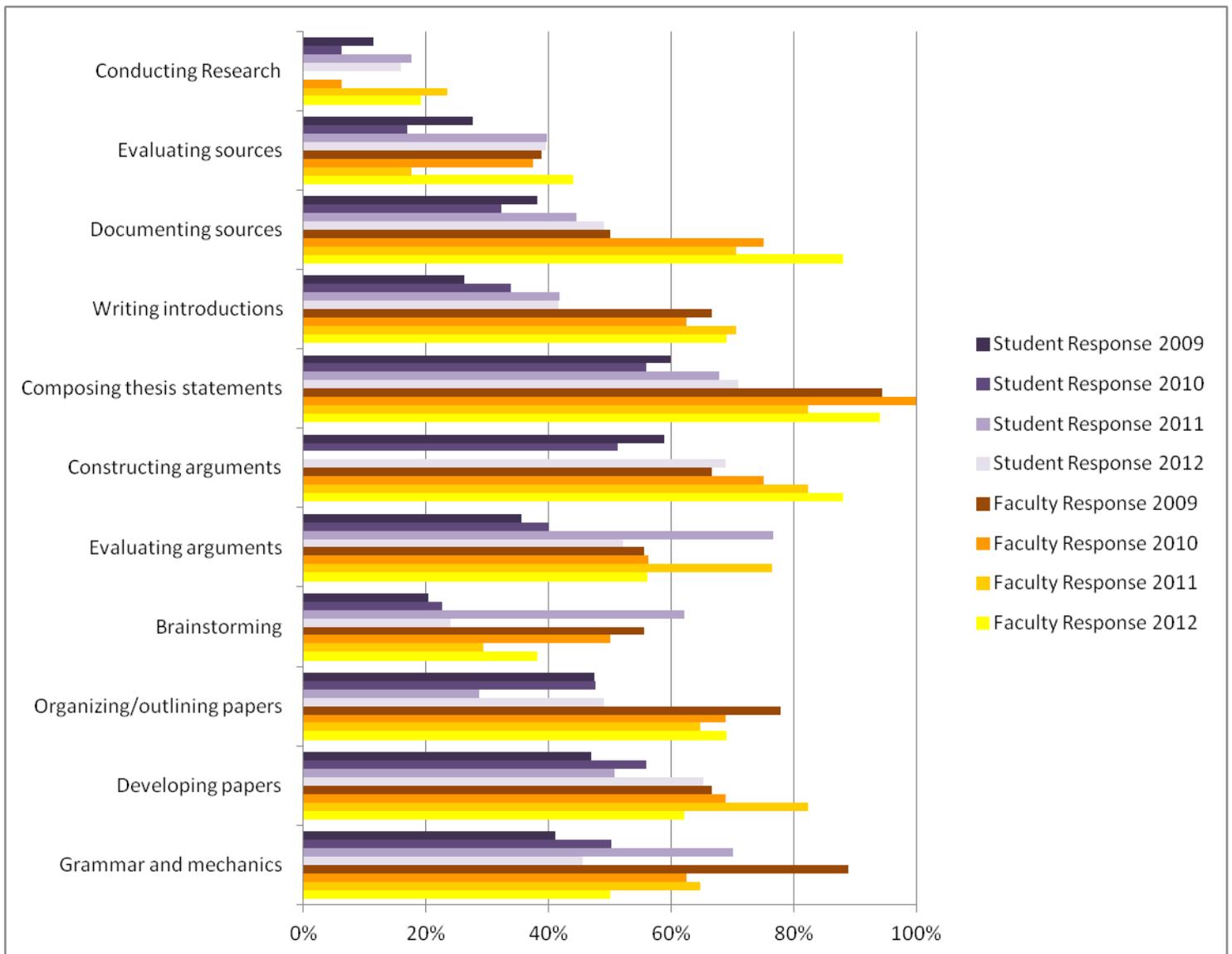
How was writing instruction offered?



When was writing instruction offered?



On what aspects of writing was instruction focused? Choose all that apply.



Direct Assessment of Writing

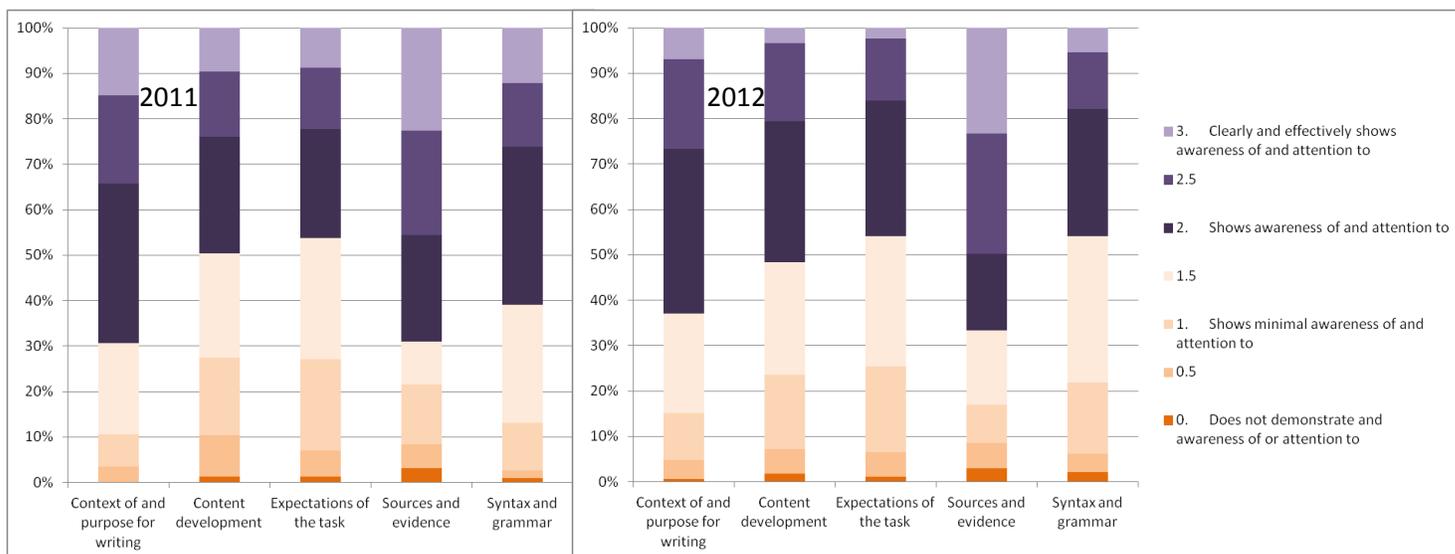
A total of 74 papers from 19 sections (16 instructors) were read and scored according to a common rubric. A total of 14 faculty members participated in the assessment with 7 individuals from the 2011 workday participating. Of these, 3 taught FP in both 2011 and 2012. 2 taught in 2011, and 2 taught in 2012. The new participants were 3 2012 FP instructors, and 4 outside faculty. One paper was read and discussed by all with regard to the assignment of scores. Faculty then read 8-12 papers and scored them individually. Each paper was read by a minimum of two faculty members. Paper scores were entered immediately to determine if there were papers needing to be read a third time, as evidenced by the number of difference scores of 2 or more. A total of 11 papers were read a third time. Two papers differed by two or more for 3 items, 1 for four items, 3 for five items, and 4 for 6 or more items. The two readers whose scores were the least discrepant were retained.

Scores for individual papers were assigned by adding the two reviewers' scores together and dividing by two.

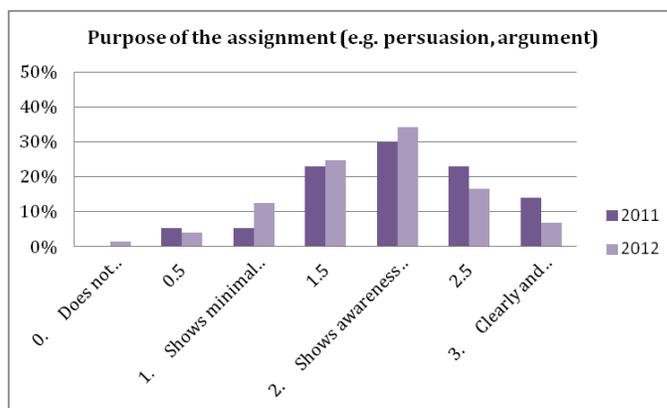
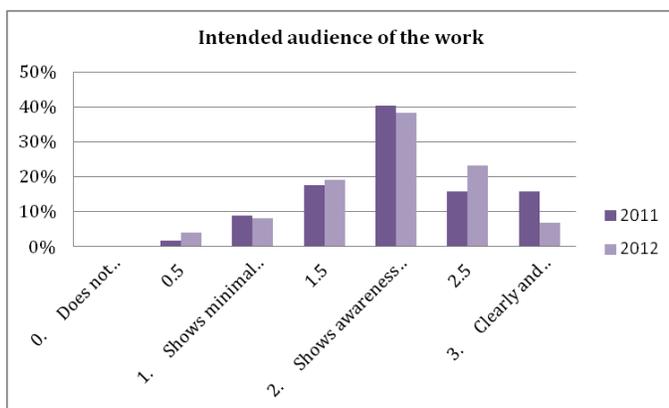
There were 16 different scale scores for each paper. There was the least agreement for the following categories: Clearly articulated thesis, Basic organization, Development of the thesis, Ideas are supported by the sources and evidence, and Appropriate grammatical conventions, with 5 paper scores differing by 2 or more. The discussion of the common paper appeared to reduce the number of differences for scores comprising the category "Sources and Evidence" that was found in 2011.

Each paper was scored on a scale of 0 to 3 for each category.

0. Does not demonstrate and awareness of or attention to
1. Shows minimal awareness of and attention to
2. Shows awareness of and attention to
3. Clearly and effectively shows awareness of and attention to

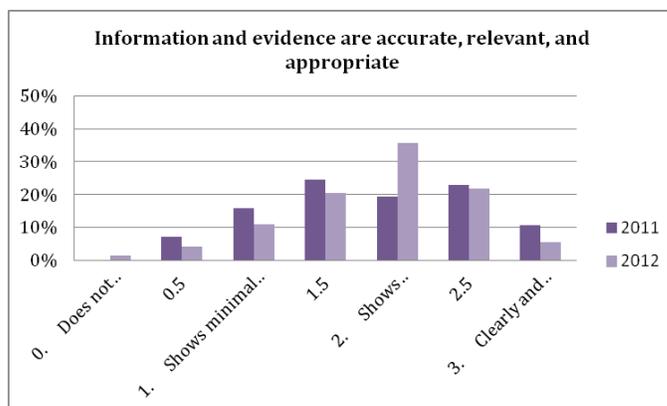
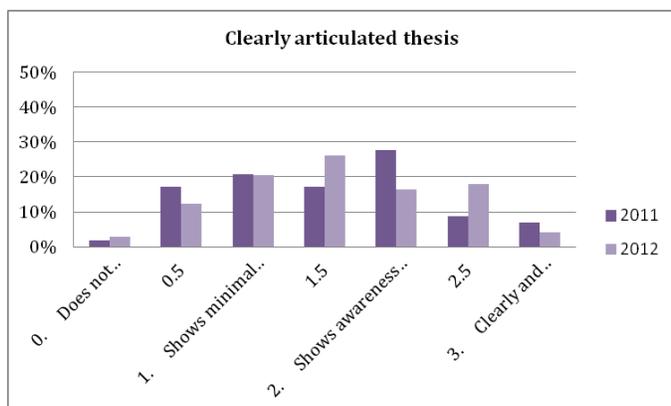


Context and purpose of writing scale items



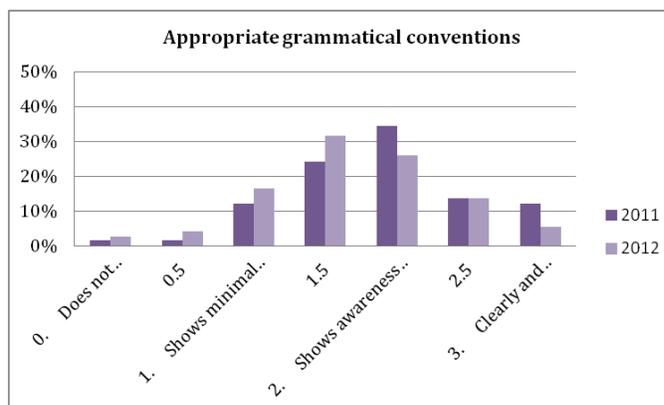
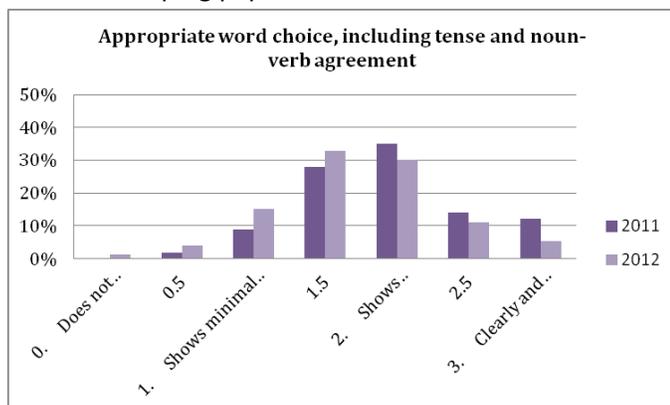
Related FP Evaluation Responses for 2012: “On what aspects of writing was instruction focused?”
 Developing papers = 65%

Content Development Scale Items



Related FP Evaluation Responses for “On what aspects of writing was instruction focused?”

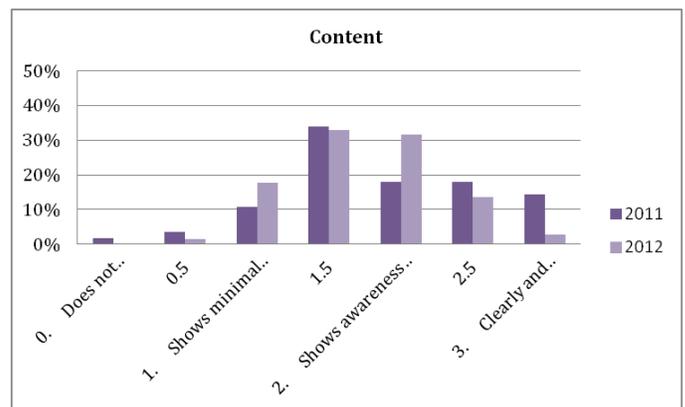
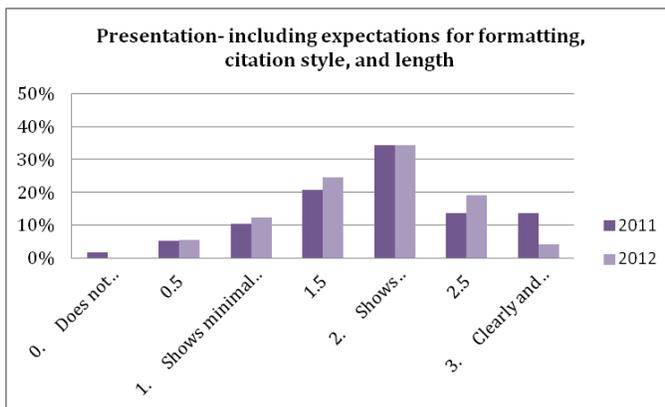
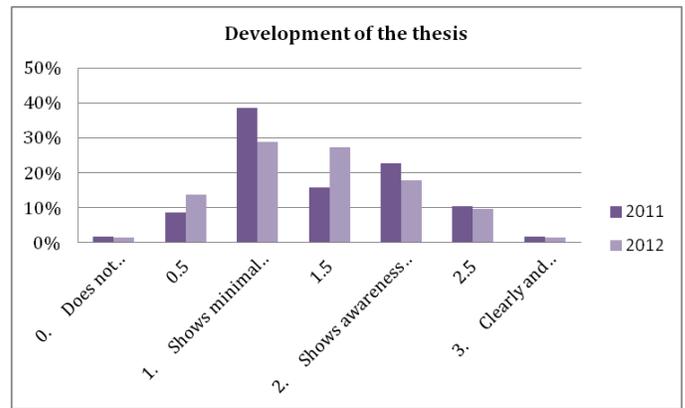
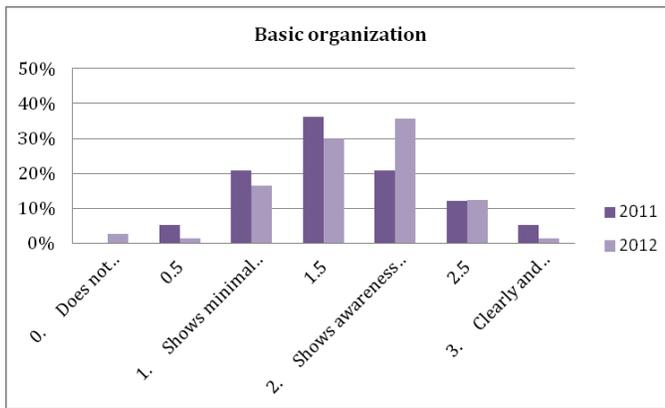
Composing thesis statements = 71%
 Writing introductions = 42%
 Organizing/Outlining papers = 49%
 Constructing arguments = 69%
 Evaluating arguments = 52%
 Developing papers = 65%



Related FP Evaluation Response for “On what aspects of writing was instruction focused?”

Grammar and Mechanics = 46%

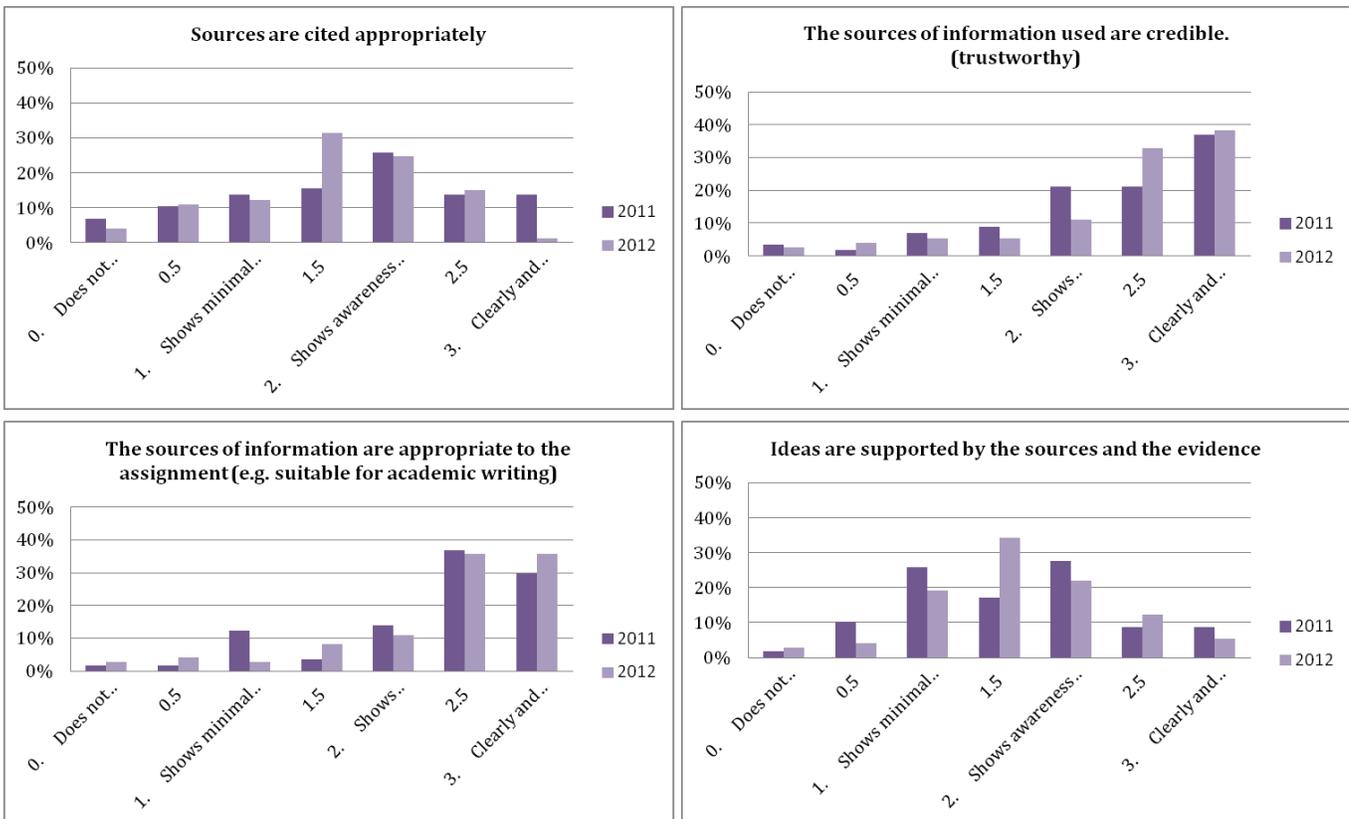
“Expectations of the task for ... “ scale items



Related FP Evaluation Responses for “On what aspects of writing was instruction focused?”

- Organizing/outlining papers = 49%
- Developing papers = 65%
- Documenting sources = 49%
- Composing thesis statements = 71%
- Constructing arguments = 69%

Sources and Evidence scale items



Related FP Evaluation Responses for “On what aspects of writing was instruction focused?”

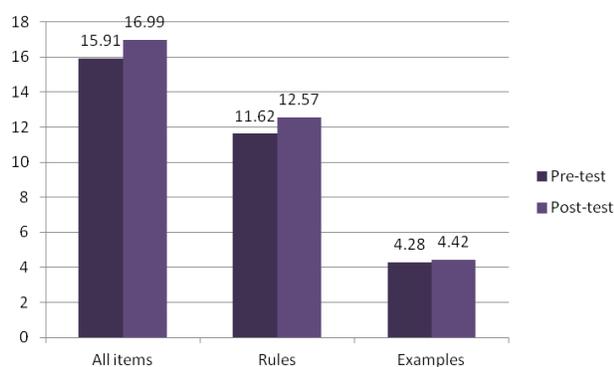
Documenting sources = 49%
 Evaluating sources = 40%
 Constructing arguments = 69%
 Evaluating arguments = 52%

The following scale items had more scores at less than 2 (Shows awareness of and attention to), than scores of 2 or greater

Clearly articulated thesis
 Ideas are supported by the sources and the evidence
 Development of the thesis
 (Expectations for) Content (48% 2 or greater)
 (Expectations for) Basic organization (49% 2 or greater)
 Information and evidence are developed and presented to explore ideas
 Sources are cited appropriately
 Appropriate word choice, including tense and noun-verb agreement (47% 2 or greater)
 Appropriate grammatical conventions (45% 2 or greater)

Academic Integrity

Students were asked to complete an online pre-test and a post-test on academic integrity. The pre-test and the post-test are found in Appendix 4 and 5. The pre-test was available to students to complete September 12, 2012 to September 19, 2012. The post-test was available to students November 6, 2012 to November 13, 2012. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment emailed students enrolled in FP to inform them of the availability of the survey. Students not initially completing the survey were sent two subsequent email reminders. Faculty were also encouraged to remind students of the survey's availability. Of the faculty who responded to the online survey, 13 reminded students in class to complete the pre-test, 9 reminded them via another means (for example, Moodle or email) with 8 faculty using both forms of reminders, and 2 not reminding students in any way. 3 offered credit, and 2 offered extra credit to complete the pre-test. With regard to the post-test, 8 reminded students in class, 7 reminded students in another way, with 5 faculty using both forms of reminders, and 6 did not remind students in any way. Three faculty members provided credit for the post-test, one provided extra credit. 314 of the registered 390 students completed the pre-test (81% response rate), 317 of the 384 students earning a grade other than W in FP completed the post-test (83% response rate).



Informational items: Students were asked a total of 20 questions regarding appropriate citations. Fourteen of these questions regarded the decision rules for whether or not to cite, and six questions asked students to identify whether examples were plagiarized from a sample text. On average, students answered more items correctly on the post-test than on the pre-test.

The percentage of students correctly answering each questions increased for 11 of the 14 rule based items. The percentage of students responding correctly increased by 4 or more percent for the following eight items:

Cite/Don't Cite

While writing a paper you use an explanation that your uncle, a professor in the field, sent you in an e-mail. (6%)

You close your paper with the commonly held wisdom that "a rolling stone gathers no moss". (10%)

In a term paper you summarize an argument you found in a scholarly journal. (4%)

While researching for a paper on national identity you run across the phrase "imagined communities" and decide to use it in your paper. (22%)

True/False

If you paraphrase something you found in a book, you can include the source in your bibliography without providing an in-text citation. (20%)

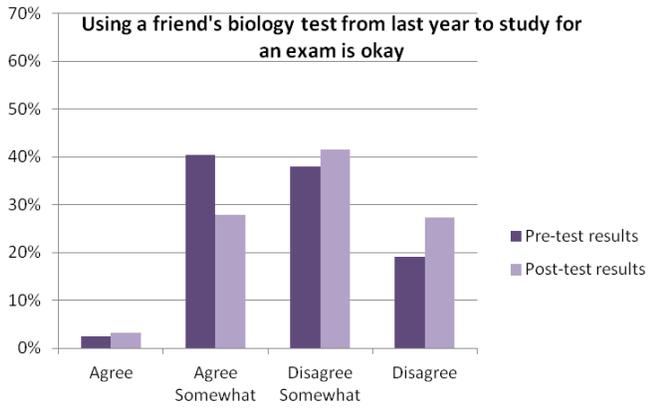
If you take a paragraph from an article, switch the order of the sentences, change a couple of words to their synonyms, you add a proper citation, you are still plagiarizing. (12%)

Poor note taking during the research process can lead to plagiarism. (5%)

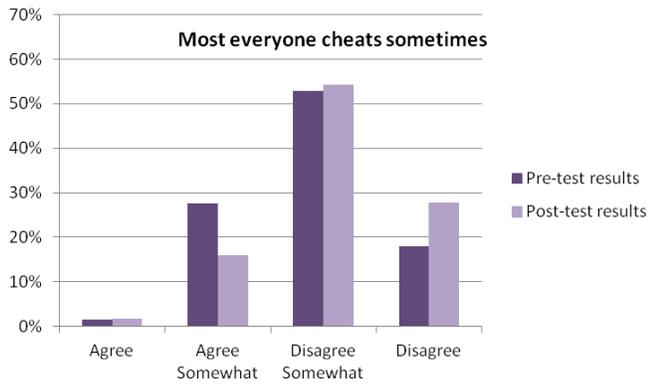
Unintentional plagiarism, like confusing your words with those of another is an acceptable defense against plagiarism. (7%)

The percentage of students correctly identifying the examples increased for 4 of the 6 items, with 3 increasing by 4 of more percent.

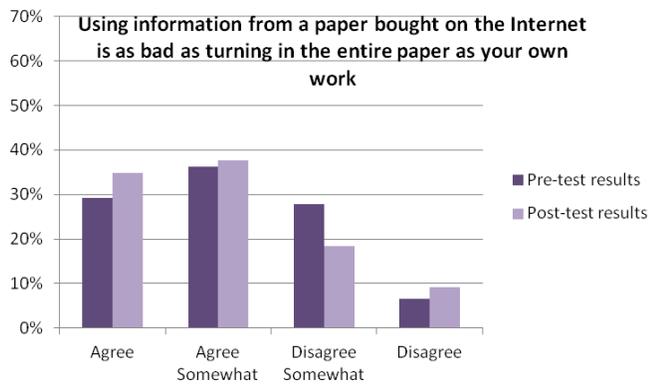
Six attitudinal items shifted by 4% or more:



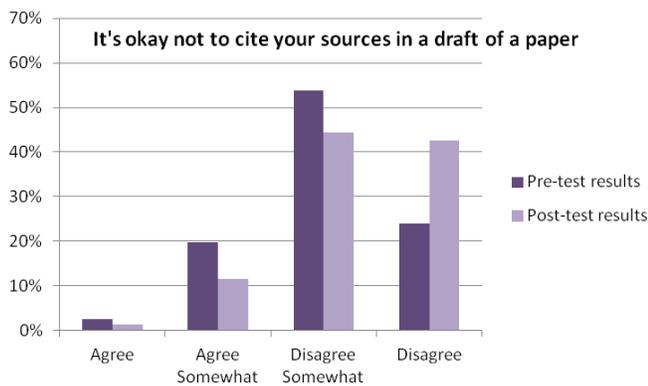
Shift from Agree to disagree = 12%



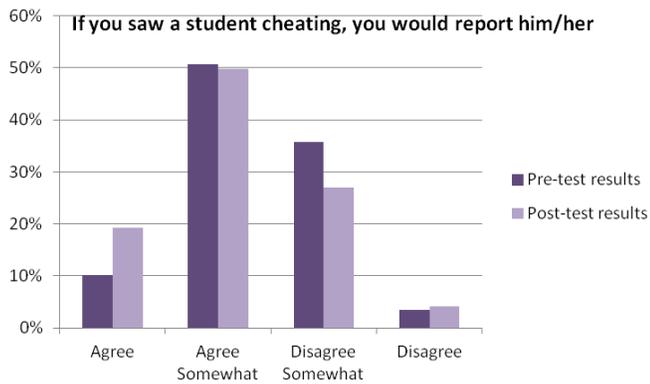
Shift from Agree to disagree = 11%



Shift from Disagree to Agree = 12%

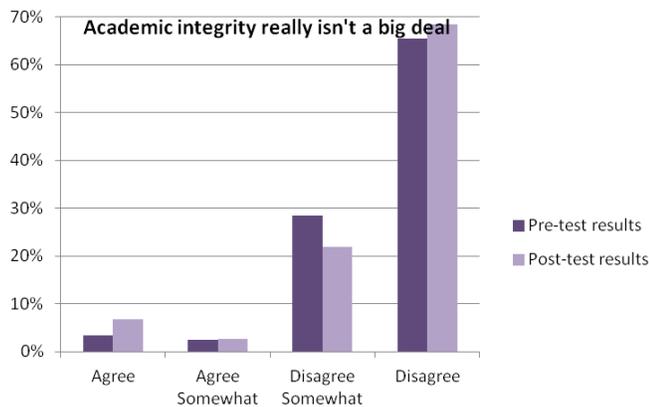


Shift from Disagree to Agree = 9%



Shift from Disagree to Agree = 8%

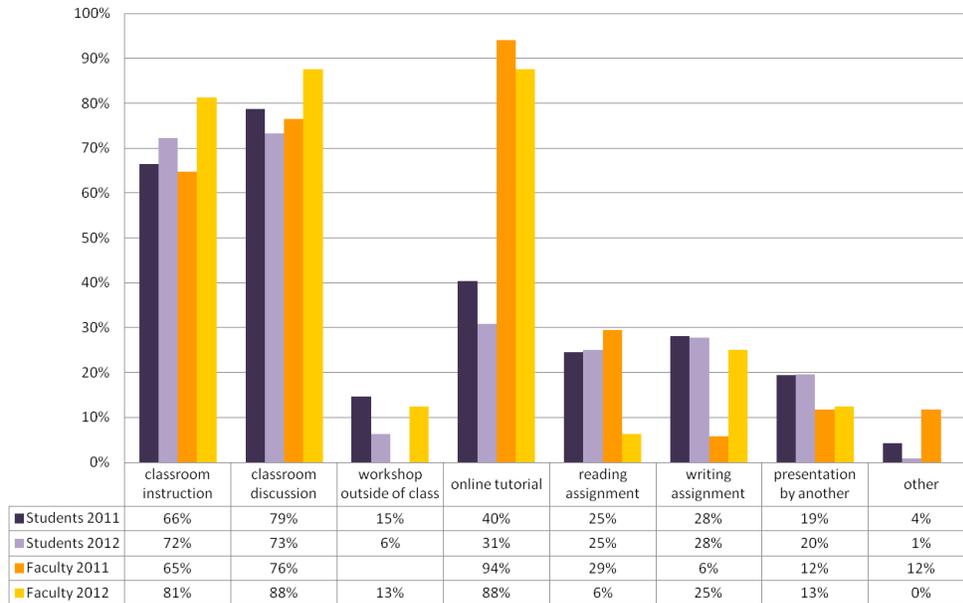
One attitudinal shift was not in an ideal direction.



Shift from Disagree to Agree = 4%

There was greater improvement, as measured by % increase in correct items, from the Academic integrity Pretest to the Posttest as compared to 2011. For 2012, 50% of faculty responded that they made at least one to two changes in instruction based on the results shared. An additional 44% reviewed the data. 13% stated that their instruction was largely based on the data. In 2011, no faculty based instruction on the data, and only 32% made any changes in instruction based on the results. 50% reviewed the data only.

How was instruction in academic integrity offered?

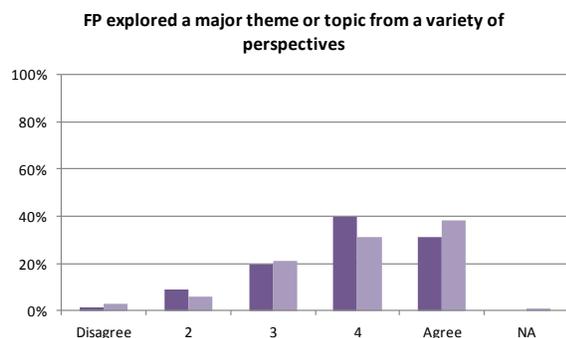


In 2011, the item “writing assignment” was omitted from the faculty survey. The value for this category for 2011 “was based on how faculty identified “other instruction”.

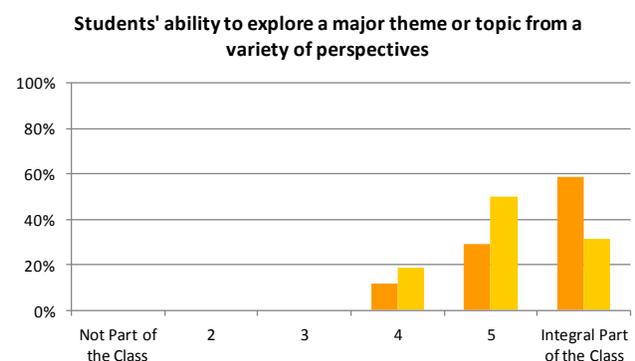
Learning Goals

Students were asked to rate several statements regarding the learning goals for FP. Students were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”, their level of agreement with each statement. These items were included in the in class FP evaluation. Faculty were asked to indicate the extent to which learning goals were emphasized in each section of FP, with 1 being “not part of the class”, and 6 being “an integral part of the class”. These questions were included in the faculty online survey.

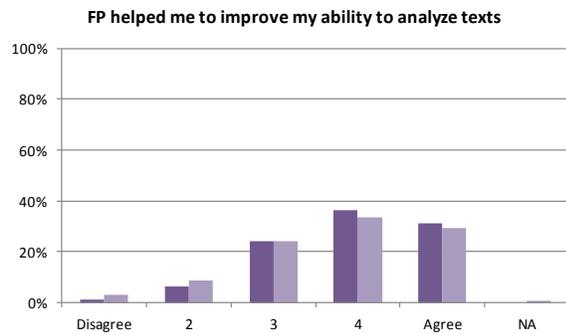
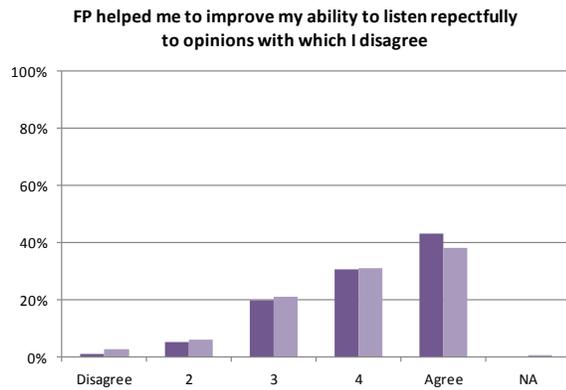
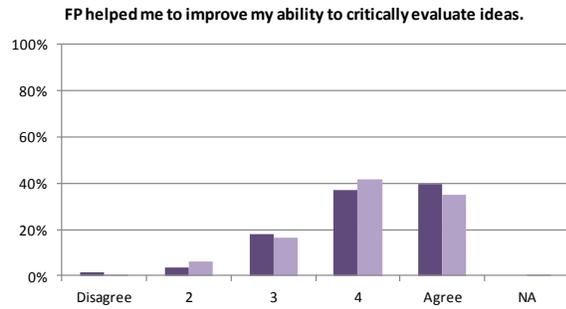
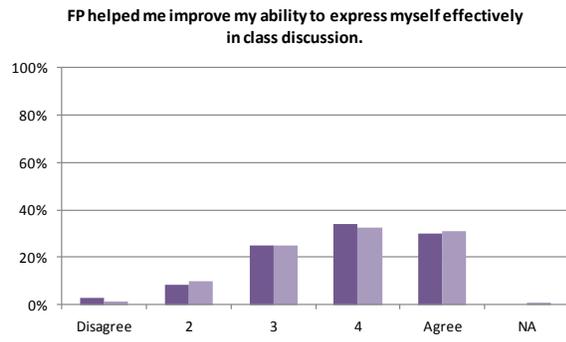
Student Responses



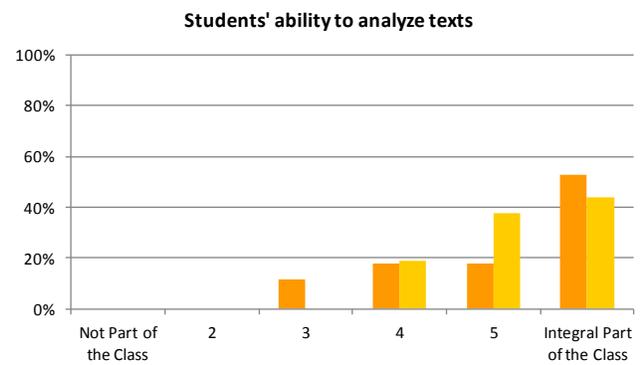
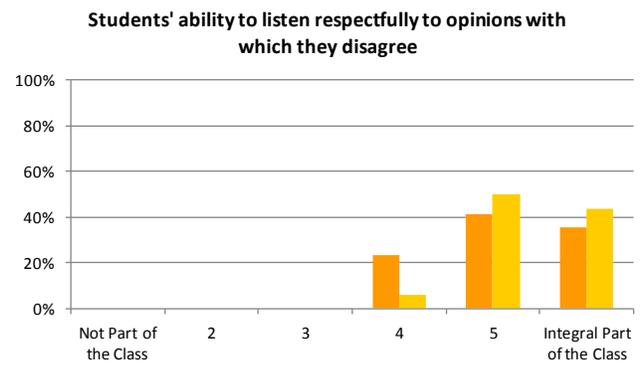
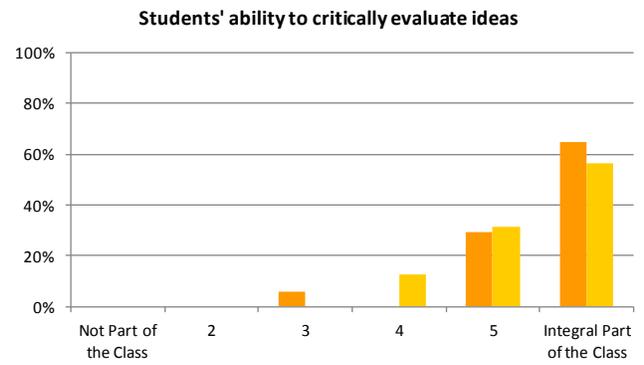
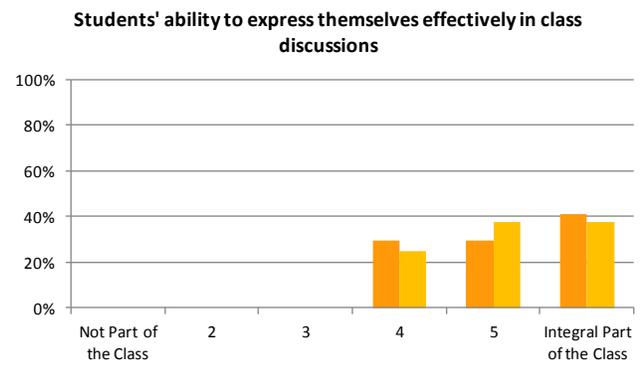
Faculty Responses



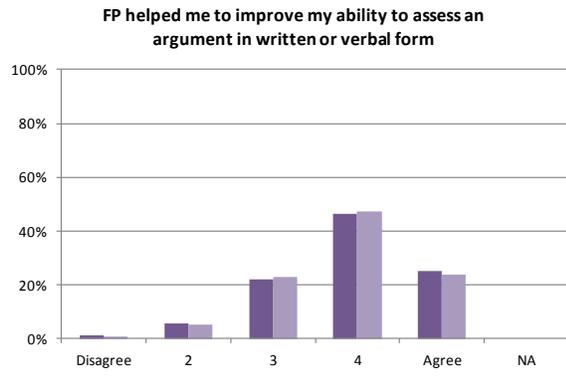
Student Responses ■ Fall 2011 ■ Fall 2012



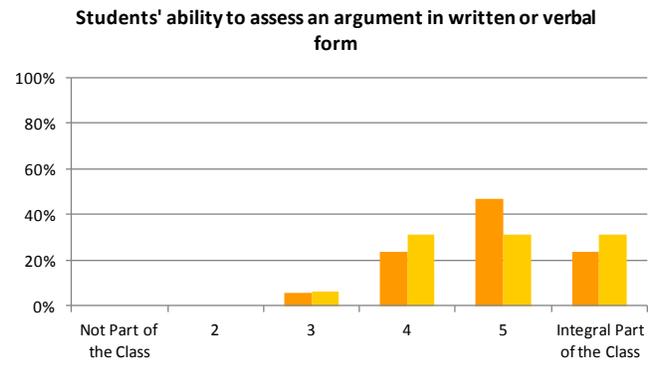
Faculty Responses ■ Fall 2011 ■ Fall 2012



Student Responses ■ Fall 2011 ■ Fall 2012



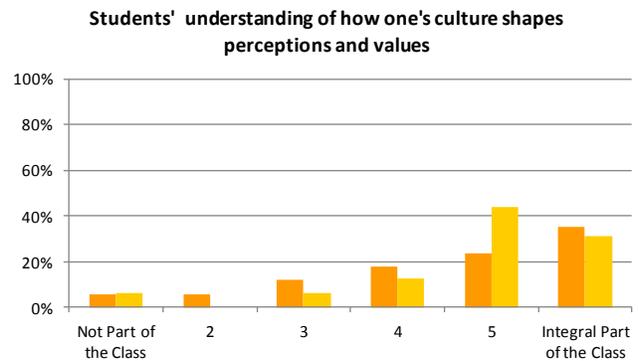
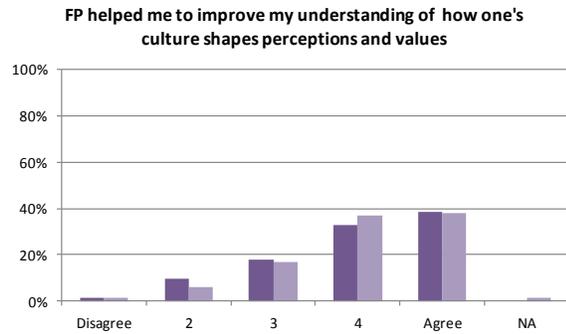
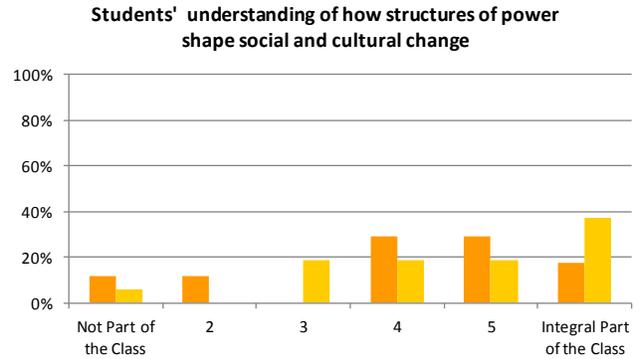
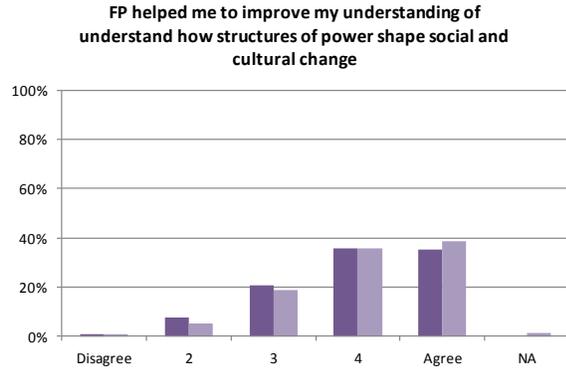
Faculty Responses ■ Fall 2011 ■ Fall 2012



Even though the new FP did not include a learning goal related to diversity, in order to directly compare the old and the new FP, two questions regarding diversity were retained in the 2011 and 2012 FP evaluations.

Student Responses ■ Fall 2011 ■ Fall 2012

Faculty Responses ■ Fall 2011 ■ Fall 2012

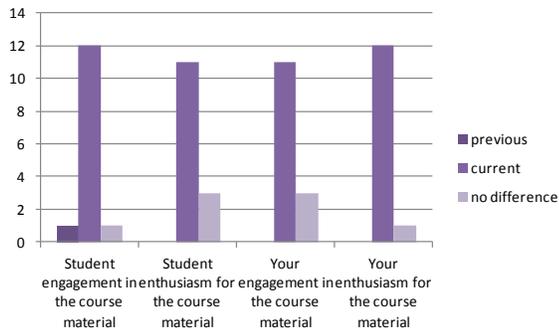


Student and faculty engagement

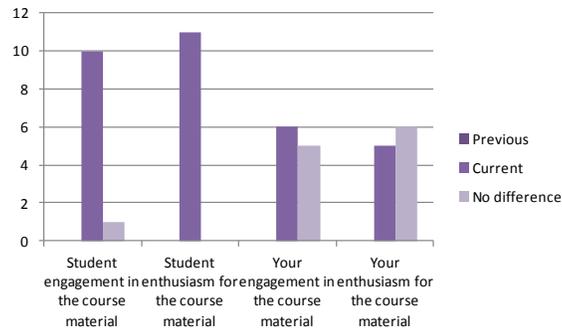
For 2012, 11 of the 16 faculty who completed the online survey had also taught FP in previous years. These faculty were asked a series of questions regarding their own and students' engagement and enthusiasm for the course. For each item, faculty were asked to indicate for which course format they believed the course was most successful: The previous version, the current version, or no difference.

The data for 2011 is for 14 of 17 faculty

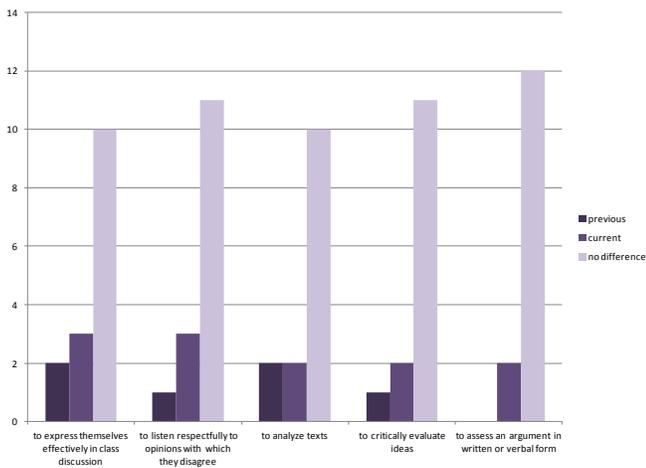
Engagement and enthusiasm 2011



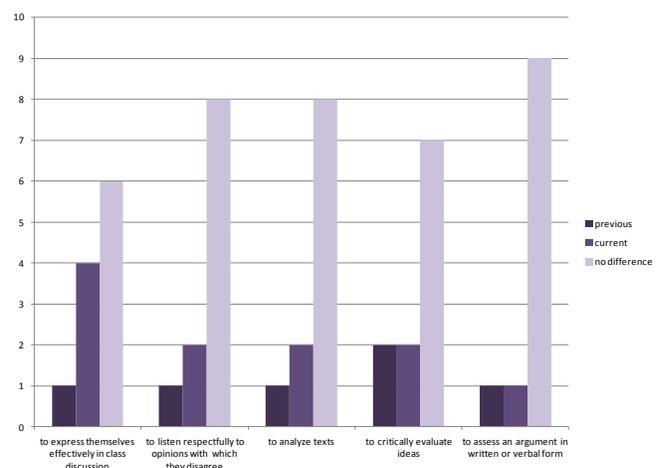
2012



Learning Goals 2011

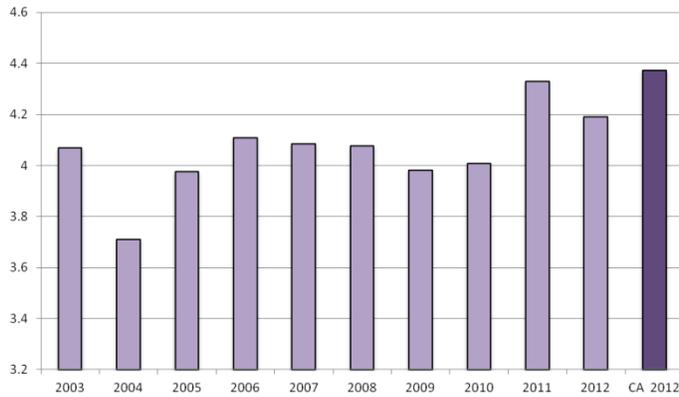


2012

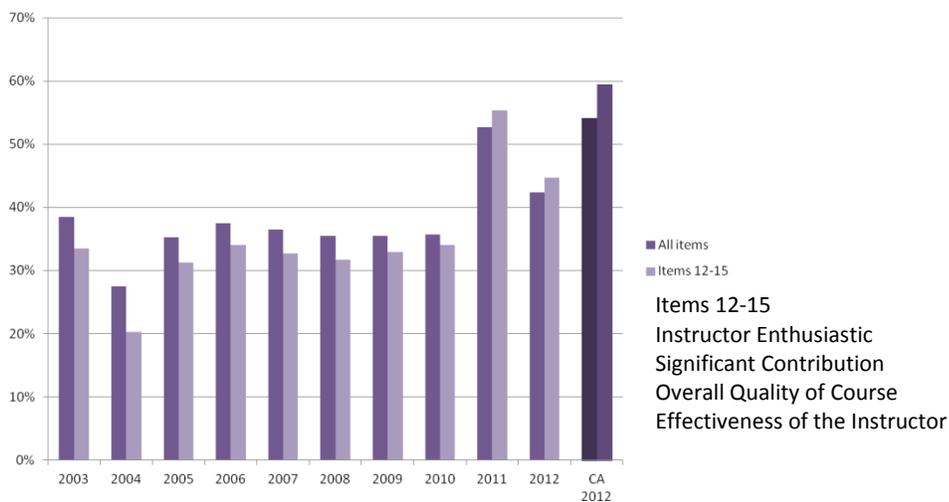


Comparisons of FP with regard to the Student Course Evaluation (standard evaluation for all classes)

Average rating for FP from 2003-2012



Percent of Very Positive Responses, all items and items 12-15, 2003-2012



Percent of students that received their choice of FP Section (N=317 students who indicated a preference, 68 students did *not* submit a preference).

