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History of the Program

When I first came to Brigham Young University, it had a three-quarter freshman English class, similar to the program still being given at many universities. In 1960-61 the school changed to a semester system, but the two-semester freshman English course was retained. In 1970-71 under the leadership of Professor Darwin Hayes, the university began a "vertical composition program" after a request from the engineering and social science departments for an advanced experience in composition for their majors, preferably at the sophomore or junior level. The initial experimental program was so favorably received that the program began to grow from that point.

The Vertical Composition Program

Under the vertical composition program, a student takes one semester of freshman English (currently, a four-hour course) and one semester of advanced composition (a three-hour course) in his or her sophomore or junior year. Although the School of Management and the Philosophy department require courses of advanced writing through their departments, and a few other departments have an elective class in advanced writing, the English department is responsible for most of the university-required courses in composition: all of freshman English and four major divisions of advanced composition. Since the university keeps its enrollment at about twenty-eight thousand daytime students and additional night school and independent student enrollment, our program is by necessity a large one. Fall semester of 1986, for example, 159 sections in the major composition divisions were taught, each section holding approximately 25 students.

The Major Divisions of Advanced Composition

The four major divisions of advanced composition in the English Department are classified as follows: hard science majors take English 316, social science majors take English 315, English majors take English 314, and the rest take English 312. Beginning fall of 1987, we will add another division--Advanced Composition for Elementary Education Majors (English 313). The current divisions of majors by category is found in more detail in Table 1. However, some departments have preferred one class over another, so the division has tended to shift slightly through the years. In addition, English faculty division leaders have conscientiously established cooperating relationships across the disciplines. We try to serve the specific writing needs of the various disciplines, and they work with us on assignment correlation, subject matter screening, suspected plagiarism, and student problems.

Requirements of All Advanced Composition Courses

All of the sections require from five to eight short papers, one major research project, and an oral presentation of that project. All of the courses follow a vigorous program of library literacy, writing competency, rewriting, and oral presentation skills. And all of the courses are demanding for the students but attempt to prepare the students for the practical application of writing skills to their future work.

1. English 316. The course taken by the hard science majors is Technical Writing, English 316. Technical Writing was the first course of the series developed as an experimental course by John S. Harris into its present nationally-known program, and at the same time, adapted and expanded into our present program.

Unique in the Technical Writing program at BYU is an internship preparation for teaching. Since its success in English 316, the internship program has been adopted by the other advanced composition courses as a method for training new teachers. A complete discussion of this program including the history of its development, the problems and solutions to staffing, and an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the internship program is found in The Training of Teachers of Technical Writing, John S. Harris, ed. In explaining parts of this program for this article, I will be using specific excerpts from this document.

Staffing: About half of the English 316 sections in any one semester are staffed by tenured, full-time English faculty members. Twenty-five percent of them are staffed by one-year appointees and twenty-five percent by senior part-time faculty members and interns. In an average semester, between 20 and 25 sections of English 316 are offered. In spring and summer terms, about 10 to 12 sections are offered. Additional comments on staffing of particular interest come from Harris's article:

To implement such a program [of this size] would require a much larger corps of teachers for technical writing and for its companion courses. For technical writing, the problem would be especially acute. Almost no English teachers have training in technical writing at either the undergraduate or graduate level. Indeed many have an aversion to anything that even looks or sounds technical or scientific. To try to recruit the few right ones, I drafted the proselyting memo on the opposite page [shown in the original document]. The memo and other dragooning techniques drew several more faculty members. (We did not accept the solution that many other schools have followed, that of turning the class over to graduate assistants). We still were faced with the task of training people we had recruited. At this point, the support of the department chairman was excellent. I had always had the support from the chairman, who even gave me veto power on faculty assignments to the course, but he now volunteered

to teach one of the sections himself, but he wanted to be trained to do it. Together we evolved the internship.

Even now, new faculty members who show an aptitude are proselyted for the program, and full-time faculty members who have taught the course are generally retained in the program. Seasoned part-time faculty members also stay with the program for years.

Internship Program. The internship program is designed for graduate students and part-time instructors, although full-time faculty members go through a modified version of the internship before teaching the course. The program begins with a semester of observation. The graduate student must have had at least a semester's experience teaching freshman English and must take English 316 for credit, or observe the class through one semester. Generally, the part-time instructor or the full-time faculty member observes the class. The second semester, the intern team-teaches the class. Again Professor Harris offers an overview of this portion:

Under the system [of internship training] an intern is assigned to teach an enlarged section of the course jointly with an experienced . . . faculty member, usually one who has been teaching technical writing at least five years. We try to make the assignments so that the interns and mentors will have mutually compatible personalities.

The mentors have rather free rein in how they manage their charges. Usually there is a weekly meeting to plan and discuss the course, the grading and the whole field of technical writing. The intern can register for two hours of co-op education credit, and may also register for additional hours of individual reading credit. The amount of time spent in conferences is adjusted accordingly.

Class time is usually divided about equally between the mentor and the intern. I prefer to give the first part of nearly every class period to the intern, who usually presents material quite close to the text by lecture, discussion or demonstration. This is the kind of material that is easiest to handle without a great deal of experience. I then can handle questions, show applications, clarify points, cover omissions or gently correct errors. This procedure gives the maximum opportunity to the intern, with the minimum risk of damage to the quality of instruction. Other mentors may give an entire class period on an assigned topic to the intern.

Paper grading is divided equally between the mentor and the intern. Some mentors prefer to grade alternate papers from each student. Other assign one group of students to the intern throughout the course.

Grading standards and problems are discussed during the weekly meetings. Either way, the grading is made easier by the use of critique sheets that contain a series of standards for evaluating each assignment.

Both the intern and the mentor hold office hours for student conferences. The students may consult either one, but we find that they usually divide about equally between the two. Interestingly, they seem to go to the intern if they feel the question is a minor one, and to the mentor if they feel the question is a difficult one. Of course, they cannot always tell the difference between a major and a minor question, but the presence of the intern gives the student the feeling that he has a kind of intermediary that he can go to with problems that he does not want to bother the professor with. Similarly, in class, the intern can often overcome his or her lack of experience with a closer kind of peer rapport.

Having an intern has other advantages, too. With an intern it is possible to have demonstrations that require two people or to play roles or have mock interviews or do all sorts of other things that can enliven the classroom.

We have been able to insist on this procedure for first-time teachers of the course, and we have thus required it of Ph.D.'s, full professors--even the chairman of the department, who was apprenticed to a young instructor, one of his former students--they both had an enjoyable experience out of it. Yes, for a senior professor to accept such a role willingly does require a very praiseworthy kind of humility.

The semester after the intern's team-teaching experience, the intern is assigned to teach a regular section of the class in which he or she has interned at the regular student instructor's teaching stipend. The course director and former mentor serves as consultant and supervisor during this semester.

We believe that our interns are some of the finest trained new teachers of advanced composition coming onto the job market, and we have received abundant feedback to justify our belief. We have about three graduate student instructors each fall and winter semester going through the team-teaching experience and more or less that number of student instructors going through the other two phases of the program.

Texts. Our students currently use Mills and Walter's new edition of Technical Writing as a text. We also have a workbook of articles, student samples, various worksheets, grading sheets, research paper instructions, and a sample research paper that all the students use entitled Technical Writing Workbook under my

name as editor and published by Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Assignments. Students in English 316 are required to write the following 2-6 page papers: letter of application and data sheet, mechanism description, process description with graphics, proposal, interpretation of data, and critique of another student's research report. In addition, the student writes a 12-15 page research report on a subject from his major field, then gives an oral report with visual aids designed for his or her audience of classmates.

2. English 315. English 315 or Exposition and Factual Writing follows a similar program to English 316 except that it is geared for the social sciences.

Texts, Assignments, Internships. The current text for English 315 is Houp and Pearsall's Reporting Technical Information. Assignments are similar to those for English 316 with the exception of the mechanism description. English 315 replaces that assignment with a memorandum or a progress report. Of the fifteen sections of the class in fall semester of 1986, five were taught by full-time faculty and the rest by part-time faculty members. One internship was in progress.

3. English 314. Writing about Literature, English 314, is for the English majors. It is quite different from the other advanced composition programs because it focuses on literature rather than factual studies. However, it also requires a long research paper as the culmination of the writing experience. Other assignments are explications of poetry, short story analyses, a term paper proposal, and summaries of literary works.

Texts, Staffing. Texts for this course are Trimble's Writing With Style, the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers and McMahan, Day, and Funk's Literature and the Writing Process. Staffing of the seven sections for fall of 1986 has been by full-time faculty members only. This pattern is common, although occasionally senior part-time faculty are needed to fill in when staffing problems occur. The internship is under discussion in this course and will probably be underway within the next year or two.

4. English 312. Critical and Interpretive Writing or English 312 has been divided into the elementary education majors and all other majors not covered in the other courses. Because of confusion in registration, the class will shortly be made into two classes, English 312 and English 313.

English 312 has the same general pattern as English 315 and English 316. Assignments are slightly different, but the research report and the number of shorter papers are the same. English 313 (or those sections of English 312 that cover the elementary education program) focuses not only on teaching writing to college

students, but also helps its students teach writing to children of elementary school age.

Texts, Staffing. Currently, the texts for English 312 are Graves' Teachers and Children at Work, Kennedy's The Bedford Reader, and Lester's Writing Research Papers. Of the fifteen sections of English 312, six sections are elementary education sections. Seven sections of the fifteen are taught by full-time faculty members and the rest are by part-time faculty members.

Specialized Advanced Composition Courses

Six other advanced composition courses are offered by the English Department in the fall and winter semesters: English 200 (Experience in Writing), English 415 (Preprofessional Writing Workshop), English 418 (Writer's Portfolio), and three sections of English 521 (Studies in Language and Rhetoric), a graduate course which offers different focuses in each of the three sections: Section 1 (The Theory of Composition), Section 2 (Advanced Technical Writing), and Section 3 (Writing Computer Documentation). All of these courses are elective.

English 200. This course is designed for students who have developed basic writing skills but wish to improve their writing before taking an advanced composition course. English 200 is staffed by tenured-track faculty specializing in composition and rhetoric. Texts that have been used are Shrodes, Finestone and Shugrue's The Conscious Reader or McCuen and Winkler's From Idea to Essay. The current text is Brandt's The Craft of Writing. Students write four argumentative papers and three analysis papers.

English 415. The purpose of this course is to build skills in the manipulation of language for specific effect designed for professions that emphasize communication. The texts used are Gopen's Writing from a Legal Perspective and Williams' Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace. The course is staffed by tenured-track faculty in composition and rhetoric.

English 418. Writer's Portfolio is an individualized conferencing course wherein the student works on a portfolio of his or her writings, bringing them to publication standard. The class is staffed by a tenured-track faculty member who has skilled in technical, journalistic, and creative writing.

English 521, Section 1. Rhetoric and the Theory of Composition is taught by a tenured-track faculty member in composition and rhetoric. The course not only examines the current issues in composition theory and pedagogy in the context of the rhetorical tradition and the history of college writing instruction in America, but it also requires writing that applies some of the aspects of rhetoric and composition in a major conference paper, oral presentation of that paper, and eight response essays.

English 521, Section 2. Advanced Technical Writing is available to both graduate and undergraduate students, but requires a working knowledge of basic technical writing skills as taught in the English 316 course. It is taught by John S. Harris, our senior member in technical writing.

English 521 Section 3. Writing Computer Documentation combines the theory of technical writing with hands-on experience. All students are put into internships with local software companies for the semester. In return, many of the companies have donated software for our computer center and for our program. The students actually write professional computer manuals during the term under the supervision of a computer specialist and the cooperating company supervisors. Some of the student technical writers have also served internships at IBM in Boca Raton, Florida.

Organization and Coordination of the Program

Each of the major divisions of advanced composition is directed by a section leader who chooses the texts, recruits faculty members for his course, visits classes, controls the internship program, acts as a liaison across the curriculum in his special focus, and meets with the Composition Council to coordinate policies and standards.

The Composition Council. The Composition Council meets monthly, directed by the Coordinator of Composition (or Director of Composition) whose major responsibility is the freshman English program. Other members of the Council include a representative of the administration of the English Department, the executive secretary of the Composition program, representatives of the Graduate Student Organization, coordinator of the part-time teachers, Associate Coordinator (or assistant director) of the Composition program, all of the section leaders including the section leader of the remedial classes, and the representatives of the Reading and Writing Center and the Computer Center. Teachers of the specialized advanced composition courses are also represented on the Council.

The University Writing Committee. Brigham Young University also has a university-wide writing committee which coordinates writing across the curriculum. Encouragement in providing writing instruction and assignments in many disciplines comes from this committee. In addition, the committee has sponsored a series of seminars on the teaching of writing across the curriculum. The seminars have been lively and well attended by tenured-track faculty from many disciplines.

In addition, the university writing committee encourages cross-discipline classes which combine writing with other subject areas. This semester a religion and freshman English course is combined, and other possibilities are being investigated. Advanced writing cross-discipline or writing intensive courses across the curriculum are still in the planning stages, as is a writing and

editing track for the English major.

Reading and Writing Center

A Reading and Writing Center connected with the English Department has been in operation for about 10 years at the university. It is operated by two full-time faculty members who organize and train 150 graduate and undergraduate tutors per year to work on a one-to-one basis with writing students of both freshman and advanced composition classes. The Center is open 11 hours a day weekdays and 4 hours on Saturday. As an experimental program, three auxiliary Reading and Writing Centers have been opened in the dorm areas--one center each for the three major groups of dorms on campus. These centers are open 4 hours a day on weekdays at prime study times (early evenings).

The Reading and Writing Center also sponsors a series of mini-classes throughout the semester, given by the tutors and by the Reading and Writing Center staff. Classes include such topics as previewing, mapping LSAT preparation, speed reading, reasoning, figurative language, critical reading skills, logical fallacies, and strategies to use in reading a novel.

Computer Center

Any student may have access to our computer center which contains 10 IBM PC's, 3 MAC's and 1 Apple computer. However, the center insists that the students use the computers for word processing only. No programming or computer games are allowed. Students pay a fee of one dollar per hour, with a free printing for the five pages if the dot matrix printer is used in a single-strike mode. Six or more pages of single-strike dot cost two cents per page and double-strike dot matrix costs four cents per page. Letter quality or laser printing runs five to eight cents a page. The Computer Center also gives classes in word processing.

Additional computer centers are found around campus to which the students can have access for word processing or instruction for a nominal fee. The library also has rental computers.

Students in advanced composition are strongly urged to use the computers in their composition. Some teachers require computer-generated papers. Many of our students have their own computers, but all students have access to computers through the various campus computer centers.

Conclusion

The advanced writing program is alive and well at Brigham Young University. Growth in the program will come as we build more writing intensive structure into courses across the curriculum to supplement the English department's vertical program and carry through with plans for a degree program in writing and editing.

Sources Cited

Harris, John S., ed. The Training of Teachers of Technical Writing.

TABLE I

DEPARTMENT CLASSIFICATION
FOR ADVANCED COMPOSITION PLACEMENT

ENGLISH 312	ENGLISH 313	ENGLISH 315	ENGLISH 316
Agri & Hort	El Education	Accounting	An Sci
Art		Agr Econ	Chem Eng
Bot & Range		Anthropology	Chemistry
Communications		Archaeology	CDFR
Genealogy		Asian Stud	Civ Eng
Music	ENGLISH 314	Bus Ed	Comp Sci
Nursing		Cl & Text	Elec Eng
Sec Ed		Econ	Geology
Sp & Drama		Envir Design	Ind Ed
Univ Studies	English	Fam Econ	Manufacturing
		Health Sci	Math
		History	Mech Eng
		Home Econ	Microbiology
		Inter Rels	Phys & Astron
		Law Enf	Stats
		Phys Ed	Zoology
		Poli Sci	
		Psych	
		Rec Ed	
		Sociology	