



---

**Gregory R. Glau**

**Stretch Courses  
(WPA-CompPile Research Bibliography, No. 2)**

**February 2010\***

During the 1990s, evidence increasingly supported what had been theorized for at least a decade: non-credit bearing (i.e., sub-100 level) “basic writing” (BW) classes were as much of an obstacle to higher education as they were an enabler. Often filled with students placed there by standardized tests with little predictive validity, such courses routinely featured reductive curricula and suffered from low morale and high rates of attrition. Very often when BW students moved into a traditional FYC course after such classes, they were still unprepared and were not successful.

In response, several significant institutional alternatives to BW emerged, including mainstreaming, the “studio” model, directed self-placement, and the “stretch” model.

The stretch alternative to BW “stretches” the content of a one-semester FYC course over two credit-bearing semesters, often with the same students and teacher. Stretch courses ask students to use the same textbooks and construct the same writing assignments as students in the traditional one-semester versions of the classes, but offer more time for drafting, revision, discussion, and so on. This alternative is thus particularly sensitive to the role of FYC programs in acclimating students, particularly nontraditional or first-generation college students, to the unfamiliar expectations, workload, and discourse conventions of the university. Since its origins at Arizona State University in the early 1990s, “stretch” courses have helped retain students on many campuses—in part because of the structural opportunity they provide for a more deliberate, reflective transition to university work and also by ensuring that that work receives credit toward graduation.

---

**Blakesley, David; Erin J. Harvey; Erica J. Reynolds**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale as an institutional model: The English 100/101 Stretch and directed self-placement program

In Royer, Daniel; Roger Gilles (Eds.), *Directed self-placement: Principles and practices*; Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press (2003), 207-241

Outlines implementation of a Stretch model concurrently with directed self-placement (DSP). The authors report that as administrators, they had to train their Graduate Assistants (GAs) in depth so they understood and could explain the new system (pre-semester workshop; detailed script on what to cover about Stretch and DSP during the

---

\*Cite as: Glau, Gregory R. (February 2010). Stretch Courses, WPA-CompPile Research Bibliography, No. 2. *WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies*. <http://comppile.org/wpa/bibliographies/Glau.pdf>. Date of access.

first two weeks of class, etc.). Authors report that students were not as resistant to being placed into Stretch because they had more agency through the DSP model; GAs' morale of was also improved, as their students were happier about taking the basic writing class [Gregory Glau, Stretch Courses, WPA Research Bibliography, No.2]

KEYWORDS: placement, directed self-placement, self-placement, self-assessment, stretch, student-perception

### **Collins, Terrence G.; Kim Lynch**

Mainstreaming? Eddy, rivulet, backwater, site specificity

In McNenny, Gerri; Sallyanne H. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Mainstreaming basic writers: Politics and pedagogies of access*; New York: Routledge (2001), 73-84

The authors outline strengths and weaknesses of several approaches of teaching basic writers, including Stretch, within a theoretical discussion of mainstreaming and whether or not mainstreaming itself makes sense [Gregory Glau, Stretch Courses, WPA Research Bibliographies, No. 2]

KEYWORDS: stretch, mainstreaming, basic, placement, program, needs-analysis

### **Glau, Gregory R.**

Bringing them home: Arizona State University's new model of basic writing instruction

*ERIC Document Reproduction Service*, ED 403 558 (1996)

CCCC presentation of initial data (two years' worth) based on 1996 WPA essay (annotated below). Reports that students in Stretch pass ENG 101 at a higher rate than do students in traditional ENG 101 classes, if they start the program in the fall semester. These students also are retained at a higher rate than those who take a traditional ENG 101 class. Reports that students who start Stretch in the spring or summer are less successful. [Gregory Glau, Stretch Courses, WPA Research Bibliographies, No. 2]

KEYWORDS: Arizona State University, basic, stretch program, two-semester, syllabus, sequence, drafting, portfolio, follow-up, retention, data, pass-rate

### **Glau, Gregory R.**

*Stretch at 10: Ten years of data on Arizona State University's Stretch Program*

*Journal of Basic Writing* 26.2 (2007), 30-48

Provides ten years of data (for about 8,000 students) showing Stretch Program students do better than their traditional counterparts in terms of pass rates and continuation rates.

Also explains weaknesses of the approach with some student populations, who don't succeed as well, and outlines how a drop in class size helped all FYC students in terms of retention. [Gregory Glau, Stretch Courses, WPA Research Bibliographies, No. 2]

KEYWORDS: stretch, Arizona State University, data, ten years, contrast-group, basic, placement, class-size, retention

### **Glau, Gregory R.**

The *Stretch Program*: Arizona State University's new model of university-level basic writing instruction

*Writing Program Administration* 20.1-2 (1996), 79-91  
<http://wpacouncil.org/journalarchives>

Two years of data from a large writing program that show an increase in retention and pass rates for a fall-spring Stretch sequence. Students who begin the two-semester sequence in the spring or summer do not fare as well. Also reports on a survey of all Stretch students, who thought overall (87% of those completing the survey) that their writing had improved, mainly because Stretch gave them more time. [Gregory Glau, Stretch Courses, WPA Research Bibliographies, No. 2]

KEYWORDS: ancillary, stretch, Arizona State University, basic, data, mainstreaming, placement, student-perception

### **Lalicker, William B.**

A basic introduction to basic writing program structures: A baseline and five alternatives

*BWe: Basic Writing e-Journal* 1.2 (1999),  
[http://english.clas.asu.edu/composition/cbw/BWE\\_1.htm](http://english.clas.asu.edu/composition/cbw/BWE_1.htm)

Outlines several different basic writing approaches (Mainstreaming, Stretch, Directed Self-Placement, Intensive, Writing Studio), as WPAs should be able to select from a range of models to design the best program for local conditions. For each approach the author describes the model, outlines whether students receive college credit, the placement process, grading options, and advantages and disadvantages of the model. [Gregory Glau, Stretch Courses, WPA Research Bibliography, No. 2]

KEYWORDS: basic, curriculum, syllabus, taxonomy, objective

### **Schwalm, David E.**

Teaching basic writing: The community college on the university campus

*Writing Program Administration* 13.1-2 (1989), 15-24

<http://wpacouncil.org/journalarchives>

Outlines the original concept of the Stretch approach (and a one semester 'Jumbo' approach, which also was piloted); explains original pilot project and rationale behind taking basic writing away from the local community college and then implementing Arizona State University's Stretch Program. [Gregory Glau, Stretch Courses, WPA Research Bibliography, No. 2]

KEYWORDS: basic, two-year, stretch, Arizona State University, pilot, two-year, needs-analysis

### **Smoke, Trudy**

Mainstreaming writing: What does this mean for ESL students?

In McNenny, Gerri; Sallyanne H. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Mainstreaming basic writers: Politics and pedagogies of access*; New York: Routledge (2001), 193-214

The author outlines the Stretch approach within the context of other approaches (the Writing Studio Model, etc.), but specifically for ESL students. Smoke concludes that all curricular decisions are local and provides a list of ten concepts to consider (really know your students and their writing; if you mainstream your ESL students, your instructors need ESL teaching expertise; the curriculum should include multicultural perspectives; provide options for students, if possible, on which classes to take; be open to change, etc.). [Gregory Glau, Stretch Courses, WPA Research Bibliographies, No. 2]

KEYWORDS: ESL, mainstreaming, stretch, basic, TOEFL, writing-studio, teacher-training

### **Todorovska, Viktorija**

An ESL instructor's perspective on the Stretch program

*ERIC Document Reproduction Service*, ED 401 541 (1996)

An ESL teacher's CCCC presentation on the Stretch approach for international students for whom English is not their first language. The author reports that ESL Stretch students benefit from a greater sense of community, better acquire the vocabulary they need to construct successful academic writing, and learn to more effectively work with content rather than focusing on just form and mechanics. [Gregory Glau, Stretch Courses, WPA Research Bibliographies, No. 2]

KEYWORDS: Arizona State University, stretch, ESL, basic, syllabus, academic community, vocabulary, acquisition, data, content-form