Abstract

General Education (GE) programs are often criticized for having weak unifying values, and are viewed as a random selection of courses by students. Creating coherence across the GE curriculum to make it more meaningful to students is a priority nationwide and in the California State University (CSU) system. At CSU Fullerton, we developed and implemented a GE Pathways pilot program aimed at unifying GE courses around four themed “pathways”. Impact of the GE Pathways on our students was examined. In particular, we assessed student writing skill development associated with the GE Pathways.

Results

All students: Significant Pre→Post improvement on all criteria

Pathways vs. non-Pathways: Pathways students improved more on “Focus”, and less on “Readability/Style”

No significant differences between Pathways vs. non-Pathways students in:
• Course grade
• GPA
• Retention (registration status for Spring 2015)

Conclusion & Discussion

- **ENG 101:** Effective in helping students develop writing skills in general.
- **Pathways:** No significant advantage based on data collected
  - Intentional “themes” may have helped students become more “Focused” in their writing.
  - Emphasis on “themes” may also have “distracted” students from paying adequate attention to “Readability/Style” issues.
- No “clean” treatment vs. control study design.
- Sufficient effort to highlight the themes and connections between courses.

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- For further information, please contact the authors at swarat@fullerton.edu.