Using an Emporium Model in an Introduction to Academic Literacies Course

Brenda Refaei and Ruth Benander

Refaei and Benander describe a newly designed basic writing course that allows students to work at an accelerated pace. The new course features modules that scaffold writing assignments, classroom tutors, individualized instruction, collective learning by students working in groups, and shared student writing. To facilitate real-time feedback, Refaie and Benander created a Google Drive folder for each class so students would have access to planning materials and prompt writing feedback. This new course design effectively supports students as they move into college level courses at an open-access two-year college.

Introduction

Research suggests that the longer students remain in developmental courses, the less likely they are to persist in their academic careers (Jaggars et al.). At our open access, two-year college, we were certainly finding this to be true. Many students in our lowest level basic writing course were not progressing to the required first-year English composition course. One model for transforming developmental course design is the emporium model where lectures are replaced with on-demand, personalized assistance as students make their way through lessons, often online (National Center for Academic Transformation). Accordingly, we designed a reading and writing course, based on the emporium model, to help students willing to work at an accelerated pace in the lowest level basic writing course to progress to first-year composition and skip a second developmental course. Students are placed into this full semester course by a reading and writing placement test. At a non-accelerated pace, they would then take one more level of basic writing before qualifying to take the first year college composition course. Students working at an accelerated pace in this lowest level basic writing course develop assignments that would indicate they are ready for the work of English 1001 for their portfolios. Typically students working at an accelerated pace develop longer writing assignments that incorporate more

sources, which they revise so the organization and development of their ideas are clear to readers. We designed our own course modules in our learning management system, Blackboard, which would allow students to learn about basic elements of reading and writing for college and to practice those elements in their own work as college writers.

In this emporium class, students chose their own reading and writing topics, and the instructors worked with students individually and in small groups to provide additional support and guidance. A typical class would involve the students working individually on their researching or writing while the instructor checked in with each student to see where he or she was in the progress of the project and offered guidance to research more effectively, think more deeply about the topic, or write more effectively. If there were several students having a similar topic or problem, the instructor would facilitate "just in time" group discussions. Classes met either for an hour Monday/Wednesday/Friday or for an hour and twenty minutes Tuesday/Thursday. Students developed work for an end-of-course electronic learning portfolio. This portfolio was assessed by a team of composition faculty who teach both the second preparatory composition course and the required first-year composition course to determine the best placement for students. The case study presented here describes one option for how to approach the emporium model of instruction in developmental education with an emphasis on student agency and personalized instruction.

Background

As more attention has been placed on higher education and its value, some are calling into question the value of developmental education (TYCA Research Committee). In a report on national college completion, Doug Shapiro et al. note that "overall, 39.1 percent of the cohort

[students who started at two year public institutions] had completed a degree or a certificate by the end of the study period" (31). In other words, these students did not complete their degree within six years of enrolling in college. Students who begin in developmental courses are more likely to withdraw from college before obtaining their degree. In examining the completion rates for students in developmental education sequences, Bailey et al. found that most students did not complete their program and progress into first-year college courses. Bailey et al. note,

> This developmental 'obstacle course' presents students with many opportunities to step out of their sequences, and students in large numbers take those opportunities. Fewer than one half of students complete their sequences, and only 20 percent of those referred to math and 40 percent of those referred to reading complete a gatekeeper course within three years of initial enrollment. (267)

These studies show that effective teaching practices also need to link to effective retention practices.

More work is needed to realize Susan Naomi Bernstein's call for "social justice" for basic writers. In "Social Justice Initiative for Basic Writing," Bernstein says that basic writing is a social justice issue because many of those placed in basic writing courses come from disenfranchised groups. Bernstein argues that more resources need to be made available to these students to address their financial, social, and academic needs. Sara Webb-Sunderhaus builds upon the "Social Justice Initiative" ("When Access Is Not Enough: Retaining Basic Writers at an Open-Admission University"). She argues that basic writing courses, especially at four-year institutions, "must address access *and* success for our students" (104). She believes that not enough research has been done on basic writers who succeed in order to describe what

contributed to that success—whether those constrictions be social support, financial support, academic support, or a mix of all three.

Several researchers have examined accelerated approaches to basic writing as a way to increase student retention and success. Rutschow and Schneider reviewed the effectiveness of various accelerated approaches and concluded that while accelerated programs show promise, more rigorous research is required to fully understand how they best serve this student population. To this end, Hodara and Jaggars examined the effects of accelerated developmental courses at City University of New York community colleges. They found that "students who started in shorter writing sequences earned approximately 2 more college credits over three years than their peers who started in longer developmental writing sequences, and students who started in shorter writing sequences were 2 percentage points more likely to earn an associate's and/or bachelor's degree within five years than their counterparts" (267-8). There was an initial dip in retention rates, but over the long term students in accelerated courses were more successful than those not in accelerated courses. They also suggest that acceleration did not work for all students—particularly students learning English as a second language who seem to need more time because they are still acquiring the language.

Based on the potential of accelerated programs supporting student success, we examined a variety of approaches for accelerating our lowest level developmental integrated reading and writing course. The Accelerated Learning Program model, as described by Peter Adams et al., places developmental students into first-year composition while taking a concurrent course to help students meet the writing requirements. Although this ALP model sounded intriguing, we were not in a position to change the course credit or to integrate the additional supportive instruction when we designed our course, due to budgetary constraints at our institution. For the

same reason we could not adopt a stretch approach described by Greg Glau or the extended instruction described by Mary Segall. Even a studio component as developed by Rhonda Grego and Nancy Thompson would require more changes to the credit hours and course structure than we were able to make in a timely manner. The modularization approach, outlined by Thad Nodine et al., seemed closest to what we might be able to do given our constraints.

The work of Nikki Edgecomb et al., who designed an accelerated basic writing course that was intentionally aligned with the required first-year composition course, seemed to offer the best direction for us as we re-conceptualized our course. Their description of how they made structural, curricular, and pedagogical changes aligned with the types of changes we envisioned for our revised course. We were encouraged by their findings that students in their accelerated course passed the required first-year composition course more frequently than students who took the two-semester option.

At our institution, the motivation for these changes came from our finding that students in our lowest level integrated reading and writing course were not continuing into first-year composition. We redesigned the course to provide an accelerated model for those students who were willing to engage fully in the course activities so they could skip another developmental writing class and go straight into first-year composition. We made the acceleration only an option so that students who might benefit from more time would not be forced into a writing course for which they were unprepared. By making the acceleration a choice, we hoped that students who chose this more rigorous option would be making an explicit commitment to this goal. The choice would also allow students who might be intimidated by a faster pace to choose a pace more comfortable for them and their skill level.

Our Context

Our college is an open access regional campus of a larger research university in the Midwest. Our college offers mostly associates degrees and some technical baccalaureates. We have approximately 6,000 students and 172 full-time faculty members. Our student population includes slightly more women than men. About a third of our students self-identify as African American, Hispanic/Latino, or Asian or claim two or more ethnicities. The average age of our students is 19, and average high school grade point average of our first year students is 2.6. Our student population is young, diverse, and in need of some academic support. As an open access institution, our college's mission is to offer an excellent and accessible education for students from a wide array of educational and cultural backgrounds.

Another important element of our context is that 36% of our students begin their college career in a basic writing course. Our college has two basic writing courses that lead consecutively to our first year college composition course. At our college, students are placed into basic writing English courses based upon an in-house placement test that asks students to read a text, summarize it, write a response to it, and to reflect on their reading and writing skills. Students who place into the lowest level course exhibit difficulties with understanding the text as evidenced in their summaries and difficulty with expressing their ideas in writing.

African-American students make up 61% of the course and another 30% are non-native speakers of English. To put these numbers in perspective, 21% of the college student body identifies as African-American, and .08% identify as non-resident aliens. The college has a difficult time tracking non-native speakers of English because most students who matriculate have graduated from an American high school. Although many of the non-native speakers of English graduated from an American high school, they have not lived in the U.S. for a long period. Many of these students report being in the country for five years or less. Students who

place into basic writing are fairly evenly divided between males (52%) and females (47%), which is similar to the general student body division. Many students placed in the course struggled in high school with reading and writing activities. Many students are first-generation college students. Because many students are unfamiliar with the college environment and the literacy expectations they will encounter, we thought introducing them to the support services available would help make the transition easier. Making in-class connections to support services seemed a useful way to encourage students to continue these relationships beyond the class. To help students develop relationships with the Writing Center staff, we asked a tutor to be embedded in our courses. Each week the tutor came to work with students individually on their writing. The in-class relationships carried over to more appointments with tutors in the Writing Center. We thought it would be important for students to know about and utilize the Writing Center services as they completed writing assignments for other courses.

In implementing this redesign, we needed to address specific institutional, programmatic and pedagogical challenges. At the institutional level, we needed to have a mechanism to allow students to progress from the lowest level basic writing English course directly to first year composition course. This was not difficult because registration blocks were removed individually when, at the programmatic level, the portfolio assessment committee indicated that students were ready to progress. At the institutional level, the unit chair then removed any registration blocks in the registration system. Our small size and our limited numbers of classes contributed to making this process relatively easy.

The pedagogical changes required by this redesign were more challenging. Our two instructors who piloted this program were full-time senior faculty with experience teaching English as a second language as well as more than ten years of experience each of teaching basic

writing in different formats. As part of our institution's quality initiative, we each received a small grant to develop the modules. Once the class was developed, it was part of our normal teaching load, compensated in the same way as any other course. A significant pedagogical change was abandoning whole class lectures for daily "just in time" personal instruction while students worked individually on their own projects. The online modules gave students the guidance they needed to move forward through their research and writing, while the instructors circulated around the room giving individuals explicit instruction when necessary. In order to make this highly individualized classroom work, instructors needed to be willing to give up control and trust students to struggle and then recover. Students needed to be able to learn from their mistakes, such as picking readings or examples that do not support their arguments. The instructor had to be able to help the student struggle with those choices so that the student might learn to make better choices.

In addition, the instructor needed to be ready to provide frequent "in the moment" teaching since the students were progressing at different paces. This kind of instruction required great flexibility and deep expertise to be able to give spontaneous mini-lessons, tailored to the needs of specific students. Finally, the instructor needed to trust the students' choices about how they approached the course. Not all students actually wanted to move directly to first-year composition, while others were dedicated to this goal. As a result, the individual students' choices needed to be respected and accommodated appropriately.

To evaluate the effectiveness of this redesigned course, we interviewed students, gave student surveys, collected student portfolios, and tracked retention data. We are continuing to track the students who placed into first-year English to assess their success and persistence. We

have found the emporium model seems to work well for motivated students who are willing to engage in the course materials.

Course Design

We began our course redesign by examining the reading and writing assignments used in the course, but we also examined what students would need to be able to do in the next developmental course and the expectations for students entering first-year composition. In these courses, the emphasis is on source based writing, often as argument. To support our basic writers in moving on to these courses, we needed to address reading, information literacy, essay structure, the writing process, and the forms of edited written standard English. We decided that a series of six modules would best help prepare students and help them practice the necessary skills for success in first year composition courses. Each module followed the same structure that consisted of first reading the module's outcomes and then completing a list of tasks posted in the module. These tasks included activities to help students reflect on their learning such as identifying their personal learning goals for the module and then assessing whether they had met the goals at the end of the module. Students were asked to view instructor created videos on reading and writing processes. They completed reading logs on their self-selected articles and outlines or graphic organizers in preparation for their writing assignments. These modules served as the course content, and class time was devoted to each student working through the modules at his or her own pace. Out-of-class work involved the students continuing to work through the assignments of the module.

Each module required a student to proceed through each of these steps. All written products, such as the reading log, analysis, outline, draft, peer review, revision, and personal goals were collected in a Google Drive folder, from which the student could upload his or her

work into a Google Site ePortfolio. In the first semester of attempting the emporium model, we did not have a time frame, and students completed modules at their own pace. This turned out to be a more leisurely pace that required an end of semester rush to complete the final modules. In the second iteration of the model, we did present due dates for the completion of each module so that the last modules would have enough time for reasonable completion.

Module one focused on reading. Specific reading skills, such as identifying the audience and the purpose of a reading as well as note taking skills, were covered in short tutorials and worksheets. The writing assignment asked students to summarize a self-selected reading and give a personal response about how their experiences connected them to the reading they had chosen. Module two focused on essay structure and built on the reading skills of the previous module. Here students practiced marking annotations on a reading, summarizing an article, identifying the audience and purpose, and writing a short essay that explained how the problem outlined in the article of the first module and this new article related to each other and what could be done to address the issue that unites them.

Module three focused on how to use readings for support. Using the writing assignment of module two, the students recast the essay to propose a solution to the problem that the two essays addressed. Module four asked students to go through the process outlined in modules one through three all at once. In this module, the students chose two new articles, wrote reading logs, and outlined their essays in such a way that related the content of the articles to each other and to a larger main idea. Module five formally introduced the structure of argument. Building on module four, students found one more article to add to the two they chose for module four, and then developed an argument that grew out of the three articles.

Finally, in module six, students focused on the creation, organization, and reflection required by the portfolio. In this module they built an ePortfolio using Google Sites, peer reviewed each other's portfolios, wrote a peer review, wrote a final reflective writing, and then wrote a letter of advice to future students who would be taking the course in the next semester. The reflective writing and the letter both received feedback on development and mechanics.

Incorporation of Technology

In the Council of Writing Program Administrators' "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition," technology is presented as an essential skill for 21st century composing. The Council states, "Writers' composing activities have always been shaped by the technologies available to them, and digital technologies are changing writers' relationships to their texts and audiences in evolving ways." The specific outcome in which technology is explicitly referenced is that students should be able to "adapt composing processes for a variety of technologies and modalities." As Nikki Edgecombe et al. note, aligning our goals with the requirements for first year composition is important so that we can appropriately prepare our students for college-level technology expectations. For this reason, we wanted our basic writing students to be immersed in the digital composition and presentation process. Some may argue that adding digital composing and presentation in an ePortfolio is adding yet another layer of complexity for overburdened students, but we did not find this to be the case. For these students the challenges lay in areas other than technology.

In this course, all writing was done in shared folders in Google Docs. The instructor for each course created a folder for each section, and within that folder, created individual folders for each student. In this way, students could do peer reviews through shared documents, and the instructor could give immediate feedback on student writing. In addition, the Google Docs

shared folders allowed students to organize their work and never lose text they wrote or papers they completed. While grades were not displayed in the shared documents, feedback was available in the shared documents, and students could consult with each other about feedback they received and how to address it. Giving feedback in this way required a thoughtful approach to constructive feedback on the instructor's part.

Using Google Docs leads easily into building ePortfolios in Google Sites. Within Google Sites, one can directly import documents from Google Docs since the two applications are connected. Since the Google Sites platform is relatively simple in comparison to other web creation products, it is easy to learn to create a basic site with basic, clean designs. Students could upload photos if they wanted to. This ease of use allowed the creation of the ePortfolio to progress relatively quickly. The ePortfolios were easily shared among students and with the faculty assessment committee.

To facilitate this technology intensive classroom, students needed to bring their own devices with them. Many already had laptops, and others used tablets. Google Docs and Google Sites are both mobile device friendly. Students who did not have laptops were able to take advantage of our library's laptop-checkout. However, if a student could not obtain a device from home or the library, then mobile phones could also be used although typing was slowed due to the small keyboard. While the opportunity for plagiarism was possible through the shared documents, it was not an issue. Perhaps because everyone's topics were different, students were not as prone to copy from others. Another reason copying was discouraged was because it would be immediately obvious to everyone in the class if a student copied another student's work since everyone could see each other's writing in progress in the shared Google Docs.

Including technology skills in this course is imperative since students learn the technology basics in this course, which will support them in other courses that do not provide a similar level of support. Instructors need to be fluent in using electronic document management and eportfolio construction, such as Google Docs, Drive, and Sites, as well as be able to explain it in ways that students understand.

Evaluation of Effectiveness

The newly designed emporium model was piloted to two sections in the spring semester of 2015 and offered to four sections in the fall of 2016 and two sections in the spring of 2015. Sixteen students were enrolled in each section of the course. We collected several pieces of evidence to help evaluate the effectiveness of the emporium model design. For example, students wrote final reflections as part of their course portfolios. These portfolio reflections were analyzed for students' perceptions of the use of technology in the course. In addition, throughout the course, students completed a weekly survey discussing the many challenges and successes they had encountered that week, inside or outside of class, which influenced their school work. We thought this survey would help us to refer students to support services that would allow them to stay in school in spite of difficult life circumstances. However, most students described challenges they faced related to the course, so we were not able to refer students to specific social services. We also asked students to complete a final course evaluation to learn what they thought of the course's design and their learning in the course. Finally, we collected retention data for students who completed the course to assess the success of the course in helping students proceed to first year composition.

Student Perception of Technology

Of the 24 students who created final portfolios in fall 2016, nine of them commented on their use of technology in the course in their reflective writing, and their reflections were positive. All of these nine students were ones who were successful in passing the course. Students commented in their reflective writing that they valued Google Drive because it helped them organize their writing and save their work. All nine students commented that using Google Drive and Google Sites allowed them to be more connected with the professors and their peers and how these applications facilitated quickly receiving feedback on their writing. They all also agreed that the organization of having all their writing in one place allowed them to keep track of their work and easily find and respond to feedback.

To present their writing to a larger audience, students created Google Sites to show their work in the course. Four of the students were clearly aware of the larger audience for their writing through having a website. They valued it as a way to see their progress over the semester, and for the English Department Assessment committee to see their progress. One enthusiastic student wrote about showing the site to peers and family as well.

These basic writers also wrote about how they valued using the library database, Academic Search Complete. The course began with searching for articles on the web through the Google search engine, but soon students needed to find more in-depth articles. Five of the students commented on how the library database made it possible for them to search for sources that were more specific, trustworthy, and relevant. One student also commented how she discovered the value of abstracts in searching for appropriate articles.

Surveys: weekly and end of course

Each week students were asked to identify challenges they faced and to describe how they overcame them. These open-ended surveys and final reflective pieces were analyzed to

identify common challenges and concerns. The survey responses reflect a curve of concern with few challenges at the beginning and end of the semester, but a peak of concerns at mid-semester.

Initially, many students said they did not have any challenges. The top challenges students identified were technology, literacy issues and life issues. As the course progressed, students began expressing more challenges around literacy learning. For instance, one student wrote, "The challenges I had this week were not knowing what to write about and not knowing how to improve describing in my writing. I overcame this challenge by asking questions, and writing down all of my thoughts before writing my full essay." This student represents a pattern seen in fifteen other students' responses in which a writing challenge is identified and then a strategy to overcome the challenge is described. In fact, thirteen students commented on class activities with six concerned about "keeping up with assignments." Ten students identified scheduling and time management as an obstacle. Some were still learning to "balance school and work."

At the midpoint of the term, October, students started to identify writing and completing class work as the most common obstacles. More students identified specific writing issues they were working to overcome like finding topics to write about, revising their work, editing their work, and citing their sources. Students also began to feel more pressure to complete the writing assignments. It was at this point that is seems students decided if they would complete the course or not. Those who were having the most difficulty dealing with their challenges left the course, and, as a result, fewer challenges were offered in the following months of the semester by those who stayed.

Interestingly towards the end of the term, more students began discussing how they were finding articles they wanted to read and that they could understand the articles they found. In the

students' final reflective writing, the principal challenge that they identified was overcoming the initial anxiety of not knowing what to expect in the course. This challenge was consistently followed by the students reflecting on how they succeeded in creating good essays despite their fear that they could not.

The end of course survey asked several questions about students' perceptions of the course structure and about what students believed they had learned in the course. Overall, most students liked the course structure as can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Student survey responses

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Achieving Personal Goals	40%	50%	10%		
Finding articles easily	30%	30%	30%	10%	
Making sense of the Modules	40%	40%	20%		
Finding self-pace useful	50%	30%	20%		
Choosing own topics helpful	60%	40%			

All students appreciated being able to choose their own reading and writing topics. Most students found completing their personal goals for each module helpful in helping them monitor their own learning. Most found the modules clear and liked being able to go through them at their own pace. Fewer students found finding the articles easy. In the open-ended questions, students also mentioned that they liked when the tutors came in and appreciated the instructor guidance. When

asked to identify ways the course could be improved, most students said nothing or in the words of one student: "Nothing. You got it."

We also asked questions about students' perceptions of the student learning outcomes, and most students who completed the course believed they were mastering the outcomes. One outcome required to be mastered for first-year composition courses is that students are required to cite their articles. This was a new activity for many students, and they appreciated the opportunity to practice. Sixty percent of students also strongly agreed that the writing assignments were helping them to become better writers. One student summarized what he learned in the course like this:

> I learned that college writing is not as hard as I thought. You have to know the basics. The topic sentences, thesis statement and MLA form, proper spelling, and explanations and citing a quote from someone else. Writing for college is like a step before the professional level.

This student identifies all the major learning outcomes of the course and illustrates why more of our students are able to move into first-year composition.

Student Retention

Table two below shows how students placed at the end of the emporium mode.

Table 2: Student Retention Rates for English 0097 (lower-level developmental course)

Year/Term	Total # of Students Enrolled in lower-level course	# of Passing Students	# of Students Placed into English 1001 (required first-year comp. class)	# of Students Placed into English 1000 (upper-level dev. class)	# of Students Continue in English 0097 (lower-level dev. class)	# of Students not enrolled in an English course the following term
2014 Fall Term	53	39	*	*	14	8
2015 Spring Term	17	10	3	7	7	7
2015 Fall Term	43	24	12	12	19	21

*This data is not available for these terms

This table shows how students have been progressing through our sequence of developmental courses towards first year college composition. The first column shows the total number of students who enrolled in the lowest level developmental course based on placement test scores. From this course, students could follow four different paths if they passed the course: 1) create a portfolio that demonstrated readiness for college level composition; 2) create a portfolio that demonstrated readiness for the next developmental course, 3) create a portfolio that does not indicate readiness to progress to the next course resulting in taking the lower-level developmental course again, or 3) pass the lower-level developmental course, but not register for any English courses in the following semester.

The student retention rates in Table 2 show that we have far more students from the lowest level class placing into first-year composition at the end of the term than we have had in the past using different models of instruction. Typically, only one student a year from the lowest

level class would be recommended for first-year composition before the course redesign. In the most recent data available for the twelve students in the Fall 2015 lower-level course, who placed into first year composition, seven registered for first year composition in Spring 2016, and of those seven, five passed the class with a grade of C or higher. The two who did not pass appeared to have non-academic challenges that impeded their progress.

Discussion

The accelerated approach of the emporium model seems to work for students who are willing to engage in the course materials. The students who came to class and consistently worked through the modules were able to progress to the next developmental course and many were able to prepare themselves for the demands of first-year composition. The students for whom this was not true were beginning English Language Learners who needed more time to develop their lexical and syntactic knowledge of English, which is similar to Michelle Hodara and Shanna Smith Jaggars' findings. As Bailey, Jeong, and Cho predicted, the students who placed into English Composition were more likely to be enrolled the following semester. Although the overall retention rates were about the same as previous terms, more students were prepared for English Composition, so we believe this approach was successful.

In their weekly surveys and end of course surveys, students identified the student learning outcomes of the course and perceived that they were making progress towards mastering them. When students faced obstacles to their learning in the classroom, they were able to seek assistance from a fellow student, a tutor, or from the instructor. Having access to so much help, students progressed at a faster pace than earlier versions of the course. In earlier versions, the course pace was determined by the instructor who also selected the reading and writing

assignments. In this redesign, students reported that they really liked being able to pick their own topics. We believe this autonomy also gave students the opportunity to view themselves as college readers and writers. Unfortunately, the emporium approach does not help with overall retention. We still lost many students to life events outside of our control. We had students who worked forty hours a week and just could not make their schedules work to include school. Others had life events like family illness force them out of the course.

This course enrolls students from a variety of backgrounds. Many of our students are first generation college students, minority students, and speakers of other languages. This course design supports Bernstein and Webb-Sunderhaus' call for social justice in basic writing courses for these students. By providing individualized instruction, we are helping a more diverse group of students to enroll in college-level English more quickly than in the past, which also helps them save on tuition expenses for another developmental English course. We integrate tutors into the course so students become familiar with the support services available to them when they move onto the next English course. Requiring students to use computers as part of the course design was intentional, and we consider it a success as well. We know that many of our students do not have access to computers or reliable internet access in their homes. Bringing in computers for reading and writing instruction allowed us to help students master the technology skills they will need for their other college courses. This course design provides not only access to college for these students but the opportunity for success as well.

Future Directions

As we continue to develop this model, we plan to follow up with students and their composition instructors to understand how well prepared students were for their next English

course. In revising the modules for coming semesters, we plan to streamline the modules by deleting or combining certain ones. We plan to clarify the learning outcomes for the modules so that students can have a firm grasp of the skills they are expected to learn. We also plan to have specific workshops for faculty who wish to teach in this style so that they can be well prepared to support students in this redesigned course. These workshops will include both the pedagogical style and the incorporation of technology in the students' learning.

Conclusion

The emporium model appears to be working for our lowest level basic writing students. In addition, this model of teaching in an accelerated way requires little institutional involvement, so any school could use these methods with willing and dedicated instructors. Jaggars, Edgecombe, and Stacey have suggested that the accelerated model may encourage students to persist by allowing them to take college-level courses more quickly in their academic programs. Our experience suggests that this may be true for the students who are able to find the academic discipline and skills as well as the personal will to progress. The individualized instruction opportunities allow students to progress at their own pace, allowing them to have the personal control over which course they would like to go to next, the next basic writing course or first year composition. Our preliminary findings suggest that the modified course structure does help some students to progress more quickly to the required first-year composition course, but it does not address overall retention of students placed in this course.

Baily, Jeong, and Cho note that the majority of students who place into basic writing courses do not progress into first-year college courses. In this pilot of the emporium model, we found that in the Fall 2015 semester, 44% of the students were not able to complete the course. The most common reason for this was a distinct lack of attendance, resulting in an incomplete

portfolio. This is not an academic problem, and we are seeking solutions through advising and student services to support these students. However, the 56% of the students who completed the course, half went to the next level of basic writing, and half went to first year composition the following semester. Of these students, the majority registered and passed the next course to which they progressed. This is the majority that agreed to invest in the academic effort required to succeed in these English courses. We believe that the personal agency these students were able to practice in the emporium model helped them to be the independent learners they needed to be in the following courses that were not in the emporium model.

Unfortunately, overall student attendance and participation did not increase with this model of learning. However, for many students, they are able to make amazing gains in just one semester. One student was thrilled by the growth she saw in her own writing where she began with writing one paragraph to writing an argument essay of five pages on a topic she chose. Students were excited about their writing projects and enjoyed learning the technologies employed in the class. We look forward to further refining the course modules, and we will continue to try to address the challenges that affect retention so that more students can experience success in their first college English course.

For those considering an accelerated model, we would recommend an element of choice and a great deal of individual support. These students are in basic writing college classes because they experienced issues, academic and non-academic, in their previous writing instruction. If the traditional methods of instruction were not successful for these students previously, then it is unclear if they will be successful in subsequent college courses. Offering an accelerated model for these students seems to be successful if the students themselves are, in part, in charge of what the acceleration looks like for themselves. In our emporium model, the student chooses the

target: the next basic writing course or the first-year college course. The breadth of diversity of our students includes people who are temporarily homeless, people who are learning English as a second, third or even fourth language, and people who are returning to college after 25 years of work. Our students' diverse backgrounds requires us to offer individualized attention to their specific learning needs and circumstances, experience with academic English, and personal orientation toward a college education. Our emporium model offers this personalized attention with the *option* of acceleration for those who would choose it. We believe that our individualized attention to each student contributes to supporting our students' success.

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Brenda Refaei
Brenda Refaei serves as the composition coordinator at the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College. She has taught developmental reading and writing courses as well as courses for English Language Learners for more than twenty years. Her research interests include ePortfolio pedagogy, writing pedagogy, and assessment.

Ruth Benander
Ruth Benander teaches developmental writing and English composition at the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College. She is the chair of the eLearning Committee ePortfolio Task Force and the editor of the university's *Journal for Research and Practice in College Teaching*. Her research interests include eportfolio pedagogy and inter-cultural development.