

# Integrating College Essay Instruction into Senior English Classes

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## **This session will provide you with. . .**

- **Materials and a plan for implementing the college essay into an array of senior English classes**
- **Data obtained from the feedback survey**

# Initial Fears

- Will this work?
- Is this really a good idea?
- [Video clip](#)

# Counselor perspective: How this evolved

- Essays on college applications=student procrastination
- Previously, counselors hosted essay workshop
  - Before school in September
  - Did not reach many seniors
- College essay unit added to College Prep Writing curriculum
  - Offered each semester--fall enrollment surged
  - Other English elective numbers decreased
- Common App growth=more students writing essays
- Perfect opportunity for collaboration between counselors & English teachers

# The Challenges

- Getting everyone on board
- Having a consistent message
- Addressing our population that isn't college bound
- Time, time, time

# Department Response

- Collaborative meeting with counselors
- Meeting with all senior English teachers
- Allow teacher input
- Delegate
- Provide rock solid information
- Allow flexibility
- Trial run
- Loose vs. Tight

# Teacher Ideas

Implementation: We provided teachers with a Google folder of helpful materials. We asked that all teachers start with the Powerpoint, and then their approach for Day 2 was up to them.

Day 1:

- Provide teachers with a Google Powerpoint in order to provide an overview of best practices, do's and dont's, dispel common myths, etc.
- Powerpoint

# Teacher Ideas

## Implementation, Day 2:

- PROVIDE OPTIONS
  - Most importantly, have models (“Good writers borrow. Great writers steal.”)
  - Model Essays
  - Helpful Links



# Teacher Ideas

What made the implementation successful with teachers?

- Teachers had flexibility
- Students had models to work from
- Students received some form of feedback (peer workshop, class workshop, teacher feedback)

# Counselor Involvement in Lesson

- Counselor joined English classes on Day 1 of lesson
  - Explained importance of essay in admissions
  - Answered a variety of college application questions
  - Reinforced value of the assignment no matter future plans

# Anecdotal Feedback, Students

What was most helpful?

- I thought this helped to make the paper very focused on what was needed. The teachers made the essay much more clear as to what was needed to make a good essay.
- Learning to make the essay stand out from the most common essays.
- I didn't know how to frame my essay and I was going to make it generic and what I thought the college would want to hear, but I saw through this that they want to really know who I am so I used a personal experience that was much stronger than what I was going to write.
- The process was extremely helpful and really bridged the college applications process with familiarity through writing.
- I liked having time in class to work on the essay since many students have to write multiple ones at home.

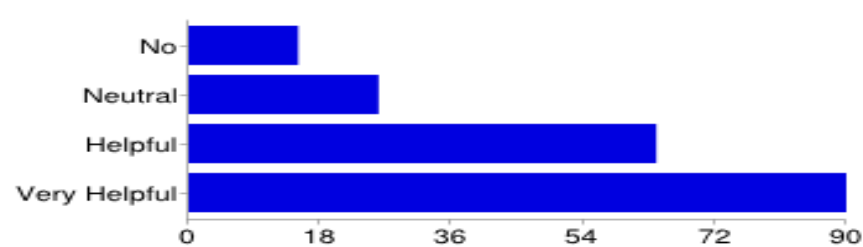
# Anecdotal Feedback, Students

- The fact we had time in class to do it made the process so much better, because it made us not procrastinate and take a break from our actual lit class to do it. We are given so much homework and a lot of kids are involved and very busy with their extracurriculars, so giving us time in class is very beneficial.
- Making the college essay a priority/grade in our English classes definitely helped to "force" us to start. Instead of having another English class assignment, we were able to focus on getting some ideas on paper.
- I would say everything about this experience was helpful. Before talking about this in class, I didn't have any idea of what to do for my college essay, but now after that I completely felt comfortable with essay.

# Anecdotal Feedback, Teachers

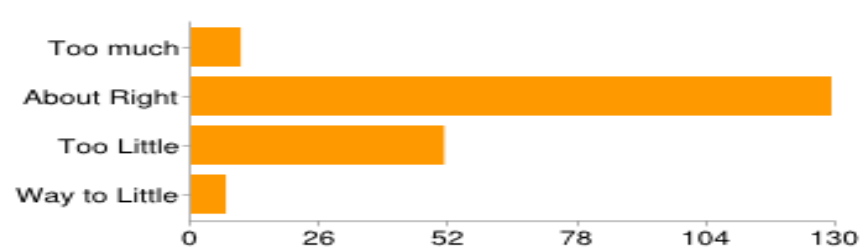
- Who can argue with these comments?
- I'm glad we could choose to give a grade or not.
- The models were the most helpful.
- This wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be.
- Having the counselors in on the first day was helpful for the students and me.

### 1. Do you think it was beneficial to use class time from English to work on the college essay?



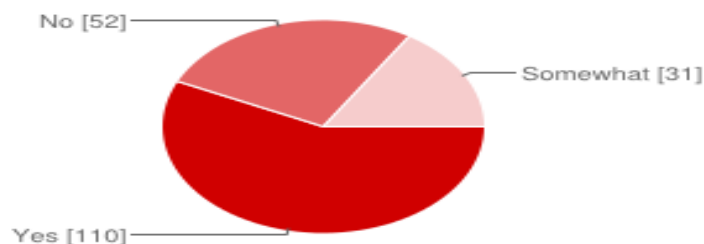
No	15	7.8%
Neutral	26	13.5%
Helpful	64	33.2%
Very Helpful	90	46.6%

### 2. Was the amount of time your English teacher used appropriate?



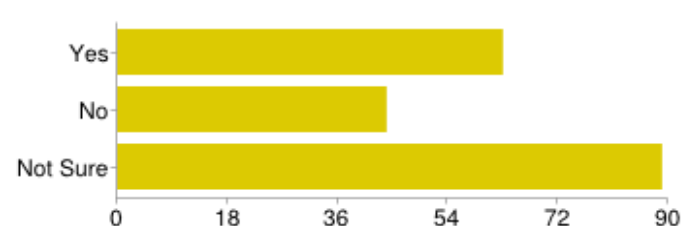
Too much	10	5.2%
About Right	129	66.8%
Too Little	51	26.4%
Way to Little	7	3.6%

### 3. Did you use the essay, in any form, for your college application?



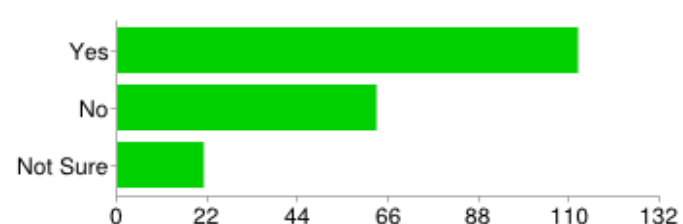
Yes	110	57%
No	52	26.9%
Somewhat	31	16.1%

#### 4. Will you use the essay, in any form for scholarships?



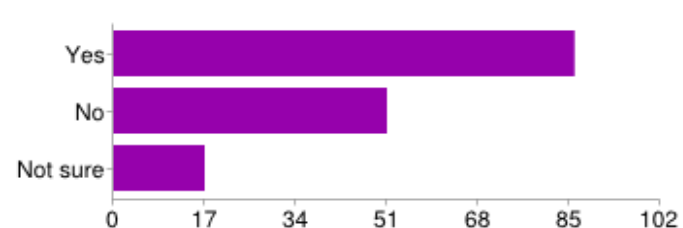
Yes	63	32.6%
No	44	22.8%
Not Sure	89	46.1%

#### 5. Will you apply using the Common Application?



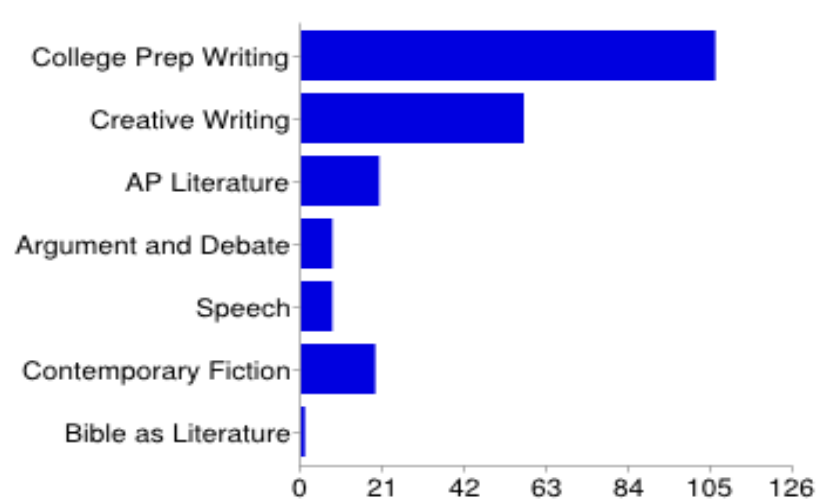
Yes	112	58%
No	63	32.6%
Not Sure	21	10.9%

#### 6. IF you are not applying to a Common Application school, do you need an essay or personal statement? (Skip if you applied CA)



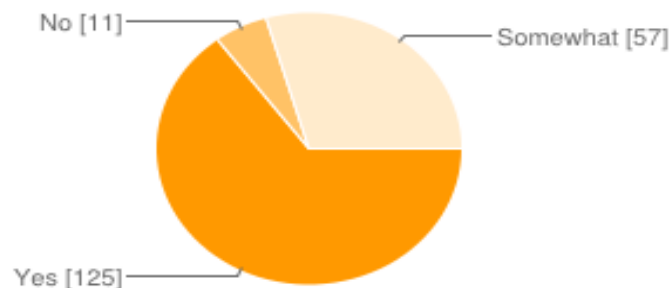
Yes	86	44.6%
No	51	26.4%
Not sure	17	8.8%

### 9. In what senior English class are you currently enrolled?



College Prep Writing	<b>106</b>	54.9%
Creative Writing	<b>57</b>	29.5%
AP Literature	<b>20</b>	10.4%
Argument and Debate	<b>8</b>	4.1%
Speech	<b>8</b>	4.1%
Contemporary Fiction	<b>19</b>	9.8%
Bible as Literature	<b>1</b>	0.5%

### 10. Was the counselor in your English class helpful in explaining the importance of the college essay?



Yes	<b>125</b>	64.8%
No	<b>11</b>	5.7%
Somewhat	<b>57</b>	29.5%



# Questions

- What questions can we answer?

