
Mixed-Level Freshman Humanities
Evaluation: Year Two

2009-10

Judith Levinson
Carrie Livingston

Research, Evaluation and Assessment

June 24, 2010

Executive Summary

When the new model for Freshman Humanities was put into place, the administration directed that the program be evaluated over a three-year period. Based on this directive, an evaluation plan was developed around the overall goals of the new Freshman Humanities program: 1) to prepare more students, particularly students of color, to take honors level courses; and 2) to improve the achievement of all students in English and History. The plan includes the collection of formative and summative information for the purpose of monitoring program implementation, making programmatic improvements, and analyzing overall program effectiveness. This report provides data from year two and should not be considered summative.

Key Findings

Overall, the data indicate encouraging results for the second year of the new mixed-level Freshman Humanities course. The demographic data indicate the program is making progress in meeting the objectives, and students and faculty generally provided positive feedback with suggestions for improving the course as implementation continues into the third year. Key findings from the evaluation, organized around ten objectives, are listed below.

Objective 1: Preparing Students for Honors Classes

The percentage of students in mixed-level Freshman Humanities taking the course for honors credit in 2009-10 continues to be almost double compared to the cohorts prior to 2008-09.

A higher percentage of students (total and across ethnic groups) from the 2008-09 cohort took honors English and History classes as sophomores compared to prior cohorts.

Objective 2: Increasing the Numbers of Under-represented Students in Honors Freshman Humanities

The mixed-level classes are more diverse and the numbers of Hispanic and Black students have doubled, as well as the numbers of low-income students.

Objective 3: Increasing Diversity of Student Views in Freshman Humanities

Based on student and faculty survey responses, teachers and students believe that the diversity of mixed-level classes exposes students to a wide range of views. These responses were significantly higher for students in mixed-level classes 3 T()TJ7s -onls and bout(h)-1.8(e cour)6samthe numoTJ7sl

points of view.” Honors-only and mixed-level honors students’ responses were significantly higher than mixed-level regular students with respect to “add to my knowledge of the topic.” In History, all of the responses were similar for mixed-level and honors students.

Objective 5: Switching Levels Easily

According to student and teacher feedback students are able to easily switch levels either by request or teacher recommendation.

Objective 6: Increasing Intellectual Rigor

In the 2009-10 survey, four questi

Objective 9: Increasing Differentiated Instruction

A majority of the teachers indicated that they implemented ideas they learned in professional development activities “sometimes,” “often,” or “all the time.” More History teachers indicated “often” compared to English teachers. Overall, teachers reported that they are better able to decide when to differentiate instruction.

Objective 10: Increasing Support Structures

Programs such as Freshman Reading, AVID, STAE, and Project EXCEL were modified in 2008-09 to provide help that was aligned with the Humanities curricula. Eighty percent of students in the Freshman Reading classes reported that these classes helped them in their Freshman Humanities class. Less than 50% of AVID and STAE students in mixed-level and honors classes indicated that the program helped them with their Freshman Humanities class.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this evaluation, several recommendations were developed:

- x Review books and materials in Freshman Humanities, both in History and English, to ensure these texts are interesting to students. Consider texts in English and new topics in History that would draw on student interests. Review assignments and projects to ensure that they are challenging students to do their best.
- x Continue to build skills in reading and research as well as in organization, effective effort, group work, writing, and taking responsibility for their learning.
- x Review professional development activities to ensure that they are of high quality and address teacher concerns around behavior issues and varied student learning styles.
- x Professional development should focus on examining the belief systems and expectations to ensure that all teachers hold and communicate high expectations for all students.
- x Review support structures, particularly Project EXCEL and Freshman Reading, to ensure that instruction in these courses is directly aligned with the coursework in Freshman Humanities.
- x Utilize the common time set aside during the day as well as time in department meetings, PLC's, and other professional development activities to discuss the mission/vision of the mixed-level model to ensure that there is a common vision and understanding of purpose.
- x Continue to identify ways to ensure that students seek out help outside of class.
- x Improve the connections between English and History in Freshman Humanities by reviewing curriculum and being more explicit about the

Mixed-Level Freshman Humanities Evaluation: Year Two

Background

Mixed-level Humanities classes are comprised of students enrolled at the regular level and honors level. This model allows students to experience an honors le

Students with EXPLORE reading scores between 70 and 94 percentile are placed in mixed-level honors classes (EN4013 and HS4013).

Students whose EXPLORE reading scores are at the 95th percentile or above are placed in honors-only classes (EN0003 and HS5003).

This report is organized around ten objectives, six of which were identified in the Mixed-Level Study conducted in 2005 and updated in

courses in subsequent school years. Under the old model, many of these students would have been assigned to a lower level Humanities course.

The number of students in honors-only classes has remained relatively stable with slight fluctuations from year to year. Enrollments have ranged from 190 (22%) in 2006-07 to 155 (20%) in 2007-08 to 177 (20%) students in 2008-09 and 199 (24%) students in 2009-10.

Table 1. Freshman Humanities Demographic Summary

	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mixed-level regular								
Black	31	40%	36	34%	112	53%	112	56%
Hispanic	7	9%	15	14%	38	18%	33	17%
Low-income	23	30%	27	26%	134	64%	128	64%
Total # students	77		106		213		199	
Mixed-level honors								
Black	16	13%	33	27%	52	23%	54	23%
Hispanic	9	8%	12	10%	22	10%	25	11%
Low-income	17	14%	31	25%	57	25%	61	26%
Total # students	119		123		229		231	
Honors-only								
Black	13	7%	11	7%	11	6%	15	8%
Hispanic	4	2%	4	3%	6	3%	5	3%
Low-income	11	6%	9	6%	14	8%	17	9%
Total # students	190		155		177		199	
Total # Honors in Humanities								
Black	29	9%	44	16%	63	16%	69	16%
Hispanic	13	4%	16	6%	28	7%	30	7%

Table 2. Course Progression: Number/Percent of Students Continuing into Honors-Level English Courses

	Mixed Regular English Cohorts						Mixed Honors English Cohorts					
	06-07 (Old Hum. Program)		07-08 (Old Hum. Program)		08-09 (New Hum. Program)		06-07 (Old Hum. Program)		07-08 (Old Hum. Program)		08-09 (New Hum. Program)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Grade 10	N=746		N=685		N=778		N=746		N=685		N=778	
EN0203 - 2 Hum Eng H	9	1%	10	1%	12	2%	27	4%	13	2%	16	2%
EN0253 - 2 Eng H	16	2%	23	3%	18	2%	60	8%	67	10%	133	17%
Total Students in Honors	25	3%	33	5%	30	4%	87	12%	80	12%	149	19%

*N represents the total number of students at each grade level during each school year

Table 3. Course Progression: Number/Percent of Students Continuing into Honors-Level Courses by Ethnicity

	Mixed Regular English Cohorts						Mixed Honors English Cohorts					
	06-07 (Old Hum. Program)		07-08 (Old Hum. Program)		08-09 (New Hum. Program)		06-07 (Old Hum. Program)		07-08 (Old Hum. Program)		08-09 (New Hum. Program)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Grade 10												
Black (N=271, N=253, N=272)												
EN0203 - 2 Hum Eng H	6	2%	6	2%	7	3%	6	2%	9	4%	4	1%
EN0253 - 2 Eng H	9	3%	8	3%	11	4%	4	1%	8	3%	23	8%
Hispanic (N=86, N=89, N=107)												
EN0203 - 2 Hum Eng H	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%	2	2%	3	3%
EN0253 - 2 Eng H	1	1%	2	2%	2	2%	4	5%	3	3%	12	11%
White (N=347, N=286, N=351)												
EN0203 - 2 Hum Eng H	2	1%	0	0%	4	1%	20	6%	2	1%	9	3%
EN0253 - 2 Eng H	6	2%	13	5%	4	1%	49	14%	51	18%	92	26%

*N represents the total number of students at each grade level during each school year

*N = (06-07 cohort, 07-08 cohort, 08-09 cohort)

Table 5. Course Progression: Number and Percent Continuing into Honors-Level Courses by Ethnicity

	Mixed Regular English Cohorts						Mixed Honors English Cohorts					
	06-07 (Old Hum. Program)		07-08 (Old Hum. Program)		08-09 (New Hum. Program)		06-07 (Old Hum. Program)		07-08 (Old Hum. Program)		08-09 (New Hum. Program)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Grade 10												
Black (N=271, N=253, N=272)												
HS5203 - 2 Hum HSS H	5	2%	5	2%	8	3%	6	2%	9	4%	4	1%
HS3253 - Afr Hist H	8	3%	5	2%	4	1%	1	0.4%	2	1%	5	2%
HS3353 - Asian Stud H	1	0.4%	1	0%	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	1	0%	4	1%
HS3403 - Lat Amer Stud H	2	1%	1	0%	2	1%	0	0%	2	1%	4	1%
HS3453 - Middle East H	1	0.4%	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%
HS3503 - Russia H	0	0%	1	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%	1	0%	1	0.4%
HS0063 - Pacific Rim H			1	0.4%					0	0%		
Hispanic (N=86, N=89, N=107)												
HS5203 - 2 Hum HSS H	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%	3	3%
HS3253 - Afr Hist H	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%
HS3353 - Asian Stud H	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%
HS3403 - Lat Amer Stud H	1	1%	0	0%	2	2%	3	3%	0	0%	6	6%
HS3453 - Middle East H	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	2	2%
HS3503 - Russia H	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
HS0063 - Pacific Rim H			1	1%					1	1%		
White (N=347, N=286, N=351)												
HS5203 - 2 Hum HSS H	2	1%	0	0%	4	1%	19	5%	2	1%	9	3%
HS3253 - Afr Hist H	7	2%	5	2%	1	0.3%	12	3%	4	1%	8	2%
HS3353 - Asian Stud H	2	1%	3	1%	2	1%	9	3%	10	3%	18	5%
HS3403 - Lat Amer Stud H	1	0.3%	2	1%	2	1%	11	3%	7	2%	14	4%
HS3453 - Middle East H	1	0.3%	6	2%	0	0%	9	3%	17	6%	20	6%
HS3503 - Russia H	1	0.3%	1	0%	0	0%	4	1%	9	3%	18	5%
HS0063 - Pacific Rim H			2	1%					2	1%		
*N represents the total number of students at each grade level during each school year												
*N = (06-07 cohort, 07-08 cohort, 08-09 cohort)												

Table 6. Diversity of Student Views

Student Survey item			Not at all	Not too much	Somewhat	Very much	A great deal
How much does the diversity of students in your Humanities class expose you to a wide range of views?							
Mixed-level	(n=412)	2008-09	9%	17%	39%	24%	11%
	(n=369)	2009-10	8%	15%	38%	29%	10%
Honors-only	(n=169)	2008-09	27%	40%	25%	6%	2%
	(n=189)	2009-10	18%	30%	37%	12%	4%
Faculty Survey Item			Not at all	Not too much	Somewhat	Very much	A great deal
How much does the diversity of students in mixed-level classes contribute to exposing students to a wide range of views?							
	(n=17)	2008-09	0%	0%	47%	47%	6%
	(n=20)	2009-10	0%	10%	20%	40%	30%

For 2009-10:

- x The data suggest that more students in mixed-level classes than honors-only classes feel that the diversity of the students in the class exposes them to a wide range of views. Responses were significantly higher for students in mixed-level than honors-only classes as measured by a chi-square test of significance, $\chi^2(10, N = 567) = 54.93, p < .000$.
- x More teachers selected "very much" and "a great deal" in 2009-10 than in 2008-09 (70% vs. 53%).

Several related questions asked students about class discussions. Results are shown below in Table 7.

Table 7. Class Discussion

Student Survey	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	All of the time
How often do you contribute to the class					

students' responses were significantly higher than mixed-level regular students with respect to "add to my knowledge of the topic" $F(8, N = 564) = 15.76, p = .046$. Honors-only students' responses were significantly lower than mixed-level regular and mixed-level honors students with respect to "boring" $F(8, N = 564) = 30.40, p = .000$.

Objective 4: Are we providing the same learning experience for students whether enrolled for regular or honors credit?

The new Freshman Humanities course provides ~~same~~ honors level curriculum to the mixed-level classes and the honors-only classes. A review of the curricula for the Freshman Humanities program in the first year evaluation report substantiated this focus.

For the 2008-09 survey, students were asked to ~~rate~~ amount of work assigned in their course. Results from this question were difficult to interpret. The question was reworked for the 2009-10 survey. Students were asked to assess how much time they ~~spent~~ on various activities as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Amount of Work

				No time at all	Very little time	Some amount of time	A lot of time
How much time do you spend outside of class on the following activities for your English class?							
Doing homework							
Mixed-level	(n=375)	2009-10		2%	15%	63%	19%
Honors-only	(n=189)	2009-10		1%	21%	64%	15%

For 2009-10:

Overall, students in mixed-level classes spent the same amount of time on their work outside of class (e.g., doing homework, studying for tests, completing projects/essays, completing assigned readings, and studying for a semester exam) as honors-only students. On a scale from “no time at all,” “very little time,” “some amount of time,” and “a lot of time,” students most often chose “some amount of time” for all the items except “studying for tests.” For this item, they most often selected “very little time.”

Objective 5: Are students able to switch between mixed-level regular and mixed-level honors level credit?

Students can request a level change, and teachers may recommend level changes. English and History teachers reported that between 12 and 16 (6% to 8 %) students requested a change from mixed-level regular to mixed-level honors. All in all, including student and teacher requests, English teachers reported that they recommended 23 students (12%) move from mixed-level regular to mixed-level honors credit. History teachers reported that they recommended 14 students (7%) move from mixed-level regular to mixed-level honors credit. Since no teacher change is necessary, these changes are easily accomplished. Ten or fewer students requested a move from honors credit to regular credit in mixed-level classes.

Objective 6: Are we increasing the intellectual rigor of the course experience?

The year one study on Freshman Humanities reported that the following changes in the Freshman Humanities course (as documented in the curriculum) suggest an increase in intellectual rigor. For example,

a common honors curriculum provided to all students whether in enrolled in mixed-level or honors-only classes;
common grading criteria and common scales for regular and honors levels; and
administration of common semester exams for the Humanities courses.

For the 2008-09 survey, students were asked the extent to which the Freshman Humanities course challenged them. Results from this question were difficult to interpret. The question was reworked for the 2009-10 survey using the definitions about rigor provided in the February 22, 2010 report to the ETHS Board of Education entitled “Defining Rigor.” Students were asked four questions using a 5-point scale where 1 represented “strongly disagree” and 5 represented “strongly agree” as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Rigor

	1-Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5- Strongly
Student Survey					

For 2009-10:

Ratings were comparable for the mixed-level and honors-only students for all but one item. Significant differences were found using a chi-square test of significance between honors-only and mixed-level classes for the item relating to the interest level for books and other materials. Honors-only students found the books/materials to be more interesting,

²(8, N = 563) = 25.63, p = .001. In general, 80% or more of both mixed-level and honors-only students gave a rating of “3” or higher to being challenged to do their best work, and learning to better analyze readings and ideas. Fifty-five percent or more selected a “4” or “5” to these items.

Objective 7: Are we increasing the level of student achievement?

Several sources of data were used to provide information on student achievement in the Humanities course including grades, results from the common semester exam, EXPLORE to PLAN test analyses, and selected student survey items.

Grades

When the new Humanities program was implemented, the following changes were put into place that may have directly or indirectly affected grades:

With the new curriculum in 2008-09, students in the regular-level classes are now taught the same curriculum that students in the honors level classes receive. This adds to the rigor of the course. Since 2008-09, the Freshman Humanities classes now have a common assessment and semester exam, which is reflected in the semester grade.

In addition, there are now common grading scales for Humanities classes.

The number of students in the mixed-level classes has more than doubled. More students are now exposed to the honors curriculum, and more students have the option of moving up from a regular-level course to an honors-level course. In the past, some of these students were placed in a course called Freshman Humanities Level 2 (regular level) or Level 1.

Tables 10 and 11 show first semester grades for the two most recent Freshman Humanities mixed-level cohorts that experienced the revised program along with the 2006-07 and 2007-08 comparison cohort groups.

Table 10. Semester Grades - English

	2006-07 (Old Hum. Program)		2007-08 (Old Hum Program)		2008-09 (New Hum. Program)		2009-10 (New Hum. Program)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mixed-level Regular (EN4012/EN0002)								
A/B	62	47%	60	45%	32	27%	50	40%
C	45	34%	38	28%	41	34%	45	36%
D/F/NC	25	19%	36	27%	47	40%	30	24%
Total	132		134		120		125	
Mixed-Level Honors (EN4013)								
A/B	81	88%	72	85%	125	76%	150	86%
C	7	8%	9	11%	22	13%	16	9%
D/F/NC	4	4%	4	5%	17	11%	8	5%

Placed up into mixed-level honors Humanities from mixed-level regular Humanities

Placed down into mixed-level regular Humanities from mixed-level honors Humanities

Students who are “qualified” are those that meet the EXPLORE reading placement criteria for either mixed-level honors or mixed-level regular and are placed within these levels. One of the advantages of the mixed-level Humanities course is the fluidity between the levels. Students can place themselves up into mixed-level honors or place themselves either

Table 13. Statistics for Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance

--

Objective 8: Are we encouraging and explicitly teaching students how to become successful in English and History classes?

Several student and faculty survey items focused on motivation, preparedness, and helpful strategies for students including effective effort. The items on strategies were reworked from the 2008-09 student survey and therefore, the 2008-09 results are not reported.

Table 15. Motivation, Effective Effort, and Strategies cont'd

Faculty Survey					
	Not at all motivated	Not too motivated	Somewhat motivated	Very motivated	Extremely motivated
How motivated are your...					
Mixed-level regular students (n=17) 2008-09	0%	24%	71%	6%	0%
(n=21) 2009-10	0%	5%	62%	33%	0%
Mixed-level honors students (n=17) 2008-09	0%	6%	24%	71%	0%
(n=21) 2009-10	0%	5%	29%	62%	5%
Honors-only students (n=11) 2008-09	0%	0%	0%	46%	54%
(n=14) 2009-10	0%	0%	14%	50%	36%
How would you describe the effort put forth by your...	None at all	Not too much			

between these two groups. However, History teachers continue to perceive a difference in motivation between students in mixed-level honors and honors-only classes.

In 2009-10, students and faculty were again asked to respond to an item about effort. The response pattern was similar to 2008-09 with about 60% or more of students in mixed-level classes responding “very much” or “a great deal” and about 90% or more of honors-only students responding “somewhat,” “very much” or “a great deal.” There were significant differences among groups. In English, there were higher ratings for effort among students in honors-only classes than for students in mixed-level honors classes which in turn, were higher than students in the mixed-level regular classes, $\chi^2(10, N = 567) = 22.38, p = .013$. However, for History, significant differences favored students in mixed-level honors classes over students in honors-only and mixed-level-regular classes, $\chi^2(10, N = 567) = 19.20, p = .038$. Teachers’ responses, on the other hand, followed a pattern where the amount of effort as represented by “very much” or “a great deal” increased from students in mixed-level regular classes (38%) to mixed-level honors classes (72%) to honors-only classes (87%). A similar pattern was also evident for the faculty survey item relating to student preparedness.

Objective 9: Are we increasing teacher understanding and use of differentiated instruction?

During the 2009-10 year, teachers participated in 17 days of workshops on differentiated instruction with Jessica Hockett, a consultant on this topic. The literature on professional development indicates that implementing a new teaching practice takes time and embedded support. Teachers were asked about their professional development experience on the faculty survey. New questions were developed for the 2009-10 survey to better understand teacher views on professional development since the responses from the 2008-09 survey were difficult to interpret. Table 16 shows faculty responses to these new questions.

For both English and History teachers, 80% or more indicated that they implemented ideas they learned in professional development activities “sometimes,” “often,” or “all the time.” More History teachers indicated “often” compared to English teachers. On a 5-point scale where 1 represented “not at all” and 5 represented “to a great extent,” 50% or more of English and History teachers gave a rating of “3,” “4,” or “5” when asked if lesson study, small group workshops, and peer observations changed their classroom practices. About 50 to 60 percent of English teachers indicated that lesson study and observation/feedback by consultant had little impact on changing their classroom practices; this pattern did not occur for History teachers. Overall, teachers responded that they are better able to decide when to differentiate instruction; about 64 to 70 percent chose a rating of 4 or 5 for this item on a scale of 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 representing “strongly agree.”

Table 16. Professional Development

Faculty Survey	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time	
When creating your lessons, how often did you implement ideas that you learned in professional development activities this year?						
English (n=10)	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%	
History (n=11)	0%	9%	27%	55%	9%	
	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - To a great extent	
To what extent have the following professional development components changed your classroom practices?						
Lesson study						
English (n=10)	10%	40%	20%	10%	20%	
History (n=11)	0%	18%	27%	36%	18%	
Small group workshops						
English (n=10)	0%	30%	20%	40%	10%	
History (n=11)	9%	9%	36%	36%	9%	
Peer observations						
English (n=10)	10%	30%	30%	20%	10%	
History (n=11)	27%	9%	36%	18%	9%	
Observation and feedback by consultant						
English (n=10)	30%	30%	10%	20%	10%	
History (n=11)	20%	0%	50%	20%	10%	
	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 - Strongly agree	Avg.
I am better able to decide when to differentiate instruction.						
English (n=10)	0%	0%	30%	50%	20%	3.9
History (n=11)	0%	18%	18%	55%	9%	3.6

Teachers' open-ended responses for these items reflected the following types of comments:

In response to "When creating your

“Reading materials, groupings, products; using techniques such as the huddle, tiered questions, and structured academic controversy.”

Objective 10: Are we increasing support structures to help students achieve?

With the implementation of the new mixed-level Humanities program, several support structures were modified to help assist students. These supports include the Freshman Reading class, Project EXCEL, AVID, and STAE. In particular, these supports focused on the pre-teaching of key concepts, explicit teaching of strategies, lessons on effective effort, and other skills (time management) needed to be successful in school. Table 17 shows these results.

Table 17. Support Structures

Student Survey		Not at all	Not too much	Somewhat	Very much	A great deal	Don't Know
How much does your reading class help you do well in your Humanities class?							
Mixed-level (n=18) 2009-10		6%	6%	22%	50%	11%	6%
Honors-only (n=n/a) 2009-10				Not Applicable			
How much does AVID help you do well in your Humanities class?							
Mixed-level (n=116) 2009-10		41%	17%	29%	6%	6%	
Honors-only (n=2) 2009-10		50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	
How much does STAE help you do well in your Humanities class?							
Mixed-level (n=110) 2009-10		42%	18%	21%	16%	3%	
Honors-only (n=34) 2009-10		44%	18%	21%	12%	6%	
How much does EXCEL help you do well in your Humanities class?							
Mixed-level (n=6) 2009-10		66%	17%	0%	0%	17%	0%
Honors-only (n=n/a) 2009-10				Not Applicable			
		I never came in for extra help.	I only came in when I needed something explained or clarified.	I came in once every couple of weeks.	I came in for help 1-2 times a week.	I came in almost every day.	
Student Survey							
How often did you see your Humanities teachers outside of class for extra help?							
Mixed-level (n=377) 2009-10		16%	52%	23%	7%	2%	
Honors-only (n=187) 2009-10		17%	70%	9%	4%	0%	

help compared to students in honors-only classes (13%). These differences were statistically significant $\chi^2(10, N = 567) = 56.0, p = .000$.

How satisfied are students and faculty with the mixed-level Humanities course?

Students and faculty were also asked to rate the Humanities course with respect to satisfaction/effectiveness. Table 18 shows these results.

Table 18. Satisfaction

Student Survey				1 - Very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 - Very Satisfied	Avg.
Rate your satisfaction with this course.									
Mixed-level	(n=409)	2008-09		8%	13%	34%	29%	16%	3.3
	(n=368)	2009-10		3%	12%	30%	42%	13%	3.5

Participation in class discussions and different points of view

- o "I found that the discussions in English allowed me to read the books in greater depth than I would have otherwise. In History, I thought the variety of perspectives allowed for better understanding."
- o "There are a lot of different views and opinions from people and it brings up very interesting discussions that make me think about a lot of things that are happening around the world and to me."

Group work in class

- o "The strengths are working in groups and how deep we talk about specific topics."
- o "The strengths of the humanities classes would be to be working in groups, doing group work and projects helps me understand the topic a whole lot better."

When asked what changes students would make to the mixed-level Humanities classes, the following comments were typical responses:

Change the literature

- o "Change the literature we read."
- o "I would change some of the literature we read because some of it is boring and not many people take something away with them after they have read it."

More interesting topics/activities

- o "I think that we should do more interesting things and we need more time in our history class. The things we do in our history class are as interesting as the things we do in our English class. Most of the time in our history class we watch informational movies and fill out movie sheets. We also need more time in class because sometimes we'll be in the middle of doing something and the bell will ring."
- o "I think the history class could go in more depth and be slightly more challenging. I felt like all we really did was worksheets, and I did not need to study for many/any of the tests because the material was really simple and sometimes boring."

Better connection between English and history classes

- o "I would change the fact that the classes are not so connected and make it where they have a better connection between the two classes."
- o "I would make more of a connection between the English and history classes."

More class discussions

- o "Have more class discussions."
- o "I would have more discussions and more interesting/motivating projects."

Time for projects

- o "The time for projects should be extended."
- o

More group work

- o “I would allow the class to work in groups more often.”

Faculty

The majority (81%) of faculty felt that the mixed-level model is “somewhat effective” or “very effective” (scale ranges from “not at all effective” to “extremely effective”) for meeting students’ needs. More English teachers responded in this way than History teachers. Faculty members were asked to provide more detail in an open-ended question asking them to explain their responses. Representative comments were as follows:

- o Four faculty members who responded with “not too effective” or “somewhat effective” suggested that “the straight honors class needs to be collapsed into the mixed-level class for the model to really work.”

o

benefit more. If it is closer to 50-50 I have noticed appreciable gains by regular level students."

Curriculum

- o "The curriculum is contrived and has many gaps. Students do not see themselves in it nearly often enough."
- o "Broadening of world studies with emphasis on world."

Year Two Findings

Overall, the data indicate encouraging results for the second year of the new mixed-level Freshman Humanities course. The demographic data indicate the program is making progress in meeting the objectives with respect to increasing numbers and diversity of students in honors classes, and students and faculty generally provided positive feedback with suggestions for improving the course as implementation continues into the third year.

Objective 1: Preparing Students for Honors Classes

The percentage of students in mixed-level Freshman Humanities taking the course for honors credit in 2009-10 continues to be almost double compared to the cohorts prior to 2008-09.

The percentage of students in mixed-level Freshman Humanities taking the course for regular credit is double the percentage of cohorts prior to 2008-09. Under the former model, many of these students would have been assigned to a non-mixed-level Humanities class or to a level below regular (Level 1).

The percentage of students in honors-only classes has remained relatively stable.

A higher percentage of students (total and across ethnic groups) from the 2008-09 cohort took honors English and History classes as sophomores compared to prior cohorts.

Objective 2: Increasing the Numbers of Under-represented Students in Honors Freshman Humanities

The mixed-level honors classes are more diverse compared to 2006-07 and 2007-08. The numbers of Hispanic and Black students have almost doubled; the number of low-income students has more than doubled.

Objective 3: Increasing Diversity of Student Views in Freshman Humanities

Students and faculty survey responses indicated that teachers and students believe that the diversity of mixed-level classes exposes students to a wide range of views. More teachers report “very much” and “a great deal” in 2009-10 than 2008-09 (70% vs. 53%). Responses were significantly higher for students in mixed-level classes than honors-only classes.

Comparable percentages of students in mixed-level and honors-only classes indicated that their teachers expect them to participate in small and large group discussions. When it comes to how often they contribute to discussion, there were significant differences among the groups in English with honors contributing more than mixed-level honors and in turn, mixed-level honors contributing more than mixed-regular students. In History, responses for mixed-level honors and

completing projects/essays, completing assigned readings, and studying for a semester exam) as honors-only students.

Objective 5: Switching Levels Easily

All in all, including student and teacher requests, English teachers reported that they recommended 23 students (12%) move from mixed-level regular to mixed-level honors credit. History teachers reported that they recommended 14 students (7%) move from mixed-level regular to mixed-level honors credit. Teachers reported that ten or fewer students requested a move from honors credit to regular credit in mixed-level classes. Since no teacher change is necessary, these changes are easily accomplished.

Objective 6: Increasing Intellectual Rigor

In the 2009-10 survey, questions were revised for this objective. Four questions were developed to assess rigor using a 5-point scale where 1 represented “strongly disagree” and 5 represented “strongly agree:”

- o My Humanities classes challenge me to do my best work.
- o The work in my Humanities classes makes me think deeply about the content.
- o My Humanities classes have taught me to better analyze readings and ideas.
- o The books and other materials in my Humanities classes are interesting to me.

There were no significant differences between honors-only and mixed-level responses for the first three items relating to rigor. Comparable percentages of mixed-level and honors students found the class to challenge them to do their best work, make them think deeply about the content, and taught them to better analyze readings and ideas. Significant differences were found using a chi-square test of significance between honors-only and mixed-level classes for the item relating to the interest level for books and other materials. Honors-only students found the books/materials to be more interesting.

Objective 7: Increasing Student Achievement

Grades: For semester 1 of 2009-10, the percentages of A/B grades increased from 2008-09 and are back to the levels prior to implementing the revised mixed-level curriculum. Similarly, the percentage of D/F/NC grades is lower than 2008-09 and more like the 2006-07 and 2007-08 levels.

EXPLORE to PLAN Analysis of Gains: One of the long-term objectives of the Freshman Humanities evaluation is to look at test score gains for each cohort from the EXPLORE test taken in grade 8 by students prior to entering freshman year to the PLAN test taken at the beginning of sophomore year to the ACT test taken at the end of students’ junior year. For this year two report, we analyzed EXPLORE to PLAN score gains for the first 2008-09 cohort experiencing the new mixed-level Humanities program. We compared the gains for this cohort with prior cohorts who were comparable to 2008-09 in terms of initial test scores but were taught under the old mixed-level Humanities program.

Overall, students made gains from EXPLORE to PLAN. In general, students in the mixed-level honors classes demonstrated greater gains in reading achievement between the EXPLORE and PLAN tests than students in the mixed-level regular classes. Students who were placed up or moved up into mixed-level honors showed greater average gains than students qualifying for mixed-level honors classes. Students who were placed or moved down into mixed-level regular Humanities generally showed smaller gains than students qualifying for the mixed-level regular classes. A repeated measures analysis of variance was applied to the data to determine if there

were significant differences from pretest to post-test between placement groups. For each group of students gain between the EXPLORE test (pretest) and PLAN test (posttest) in reading performance was statistically significant.

There were no significant differences in the gain scores among the placement groups for each cohort. In other words, gains were similar for students whether they experienced the new revised Humanities program or the former Humanities program. It is important to point out that with the revised program beginning in 2008-09, the number of regular level students in mixed-level classes was greater because of the more inclusive criteria. Even so, the gains of mixed-level honors students remained strong and similar to prior cohorts.

The 2008-09 cohort included the first mixed-level group at the regular level to be exposed to the new curriculum. With upcoming cohorts, one might anticipate greater gains for the mixed-level regular students now experiencing an honors curriculum. Even though these students did not show greater gains on EXPLORE to PLAN than prior cohorts, more 2008-09 students took honors courses as sophomores than the 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts. Therefore, there may be greater gains from PLAN to ACT when these analyses are conducted after their junior year.

An additional analysis was conducted between students in the Freshman Humanities honors-only classes (EN0003) with EXPLORE reading scores in the 95th percentile or greater and students in the Freshman Humanities mixed-level honors classes (EN4013) who have EXPLORE reading scores between the 85th and 94th percentiles. These students reflect the top end of the mixed-level honors group.

Students in the high-end mixed-level honors group showed greater gains than the honors-only students in reading achievement between the EXPLORE and PLAN assessments, although slightly lower than the average gains made by the entire group of correctly placed mixed-level honors students. Based on a conversation with ACT, we found that it is not unusual for students whose scores are at the high end of a scale to show only small amounts of growth between assessments. All assessments have a ceiling effect. Some students at the high end do see their scores increase a little, but for the most part scores stay the around the same or drop a little. This is partly due to a statistical artifact called “regression to the mean” where there is a tendency of scores to gravitate towards a center of distribution, or the mean of scores.

Objective 8: Encouraging and Explicitly Teaching Students to Become Successful

Both students in mixed-level and honors-only Humanities classes rated themselves high on motivation. Students in honors-only Humanities English classes gave significantly higher ratings than students in mixed-level classes. There were no significant differences between students in honors-only and mixed-level classes for History.

However, faculty responses were lower for mixed-level regular, higher for mixed-level honors and even higher for honors-only students. Responses were different for English teachers compared to History teachers. About 80 % of English teachers indicated that both mixed-level honors and honors-only students were “very motivated” or “extremely motivated.” In contrast, about 55 % of History teachers rated mixed-level students as “very” or “extremely motivated”; 86% of History teachers rated honors-only students as “very” or “extremely motivated.” There were also differences between teachers and students with respect to effort and preparedness.

Students were also asked to rate the extent to which they improved in seven areas (effective effort, being responsible for your learning, working in groups, organization, reading, writing, and research). For two areas, reading and research, there were significant differences between honors-only, mixed-level honors and mixed-level regular students. More mixed-level regular students felt their Humanities classes helped them improve in reading and research than students in mixed-

level honors. Also, more students in mixed-level honors classes reported improving in reading and research than honors-only Freshman Humanities students.

Objective 9: Increasing Differentiated Instruction

Eighty percent or more of teachers indicated that they implemented ideas they learned in professional development activities “sometimes,” “often,” or “all the time.” More History teachers indicated “often” compared to English teachers. Fifty percent or more of both English and History teachers indicated that lesson study, small group workshops, peer observations and observation/feedback by consultant changed their classroom practices “sometimes,” “often,” or “all the time.” Overall, teachers responded that they are better able to decide when to differentiate instruction.

Objective 10: Increasing Support Structures

Programs such as STAE, Project EXCEL, AVID, and Freshman Reading were modified in 2008-09 to provide help aligned with the Humanities curricula. Eighty percent of students in Freshman Reading classes reported that these reading classes

Utilize the common time set aside during the day as well as time in department meetings, PLC's, and other professional development activities to discuss the mission/vision of the mixed-level model to ensure that there is a common vision and understanding of purpose.

Continue to identify ways to ensure that students to seek out help outside of class.

Improve the connections between English and History in Freshman Humanities by reviewing curriculum and being more explicit about the connections in answering essential questions.

Appendix A

Objective 3: Diversity of Student Views

			Course Level			Total
			ML-Regular	ML-Honors	Honors	
Q14_Diversity_ExposeRange Views		Count	4	4	1	9
		% within Course Level	2.6%	1.8%	.5%	1.6%
	A great deal	Count	9	27	7	43

Objective 3: Class Discussion

		Course Level			Total
		ML-Regular	ML-Honors	Honors	
Q8b_	Count	3	7	4	14
Contribute_					
ClassDiscuss_					
HSS					

Objective 3: Class Discussion

			Course Level			Total
			ML-Regular	ML-Honors	Honors	
Q6b_Think _ENG	strongly disagree	Count	6	6	4	16
		% within Course Level	3.9%	2.7%	2.1%	2.8%
	2	Count	22	29	16	67

Objective 3: Class Discussion

Course Level

ML-

Objective 6: Rigor

			Course Level			Total
			ML- Regular	ML-Honors	Honors	
Q13b_Books _Interesting	strongly disagree	Count	16	26	5	47
		% within Course Level	10.5%	11.8%	2.6%	8.3%
	2	Count	33	42	28	103
		% within Course Level	21.6%	19.1%	14.7%	18.3%
	3	Count	54	76	59	189
		% within Course Level	35.3%	34.5%	31.1%	33.6%
	4	Count	31	55	67	153
		% within Course Level	20.3%	25.0%	35.3%	27.2%
	strongly agree	Count	19	21	31	71
		% within Course Level	12.4%	9.5%	16.3%	12.6%
Total		Count	153	220	190	563
		% within Course Level	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Objective 8: Motivation, Effective Effort, & Strategies

		Course Level			Total
		ML-Regular	ML-Honors	Honors	

Objective 8: Motivation, Effective Effort, & Strategies

Course Level

Total

